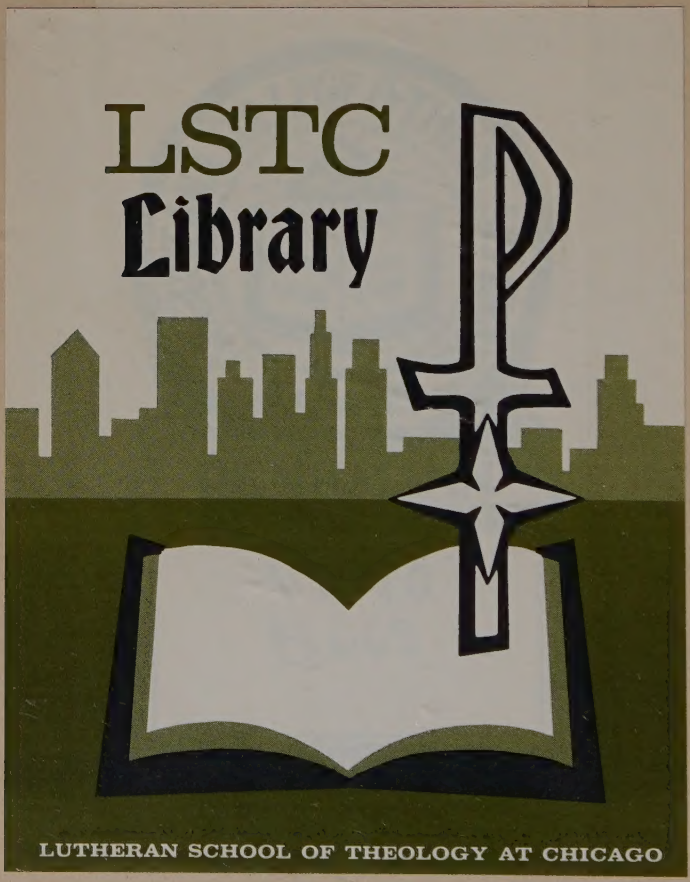
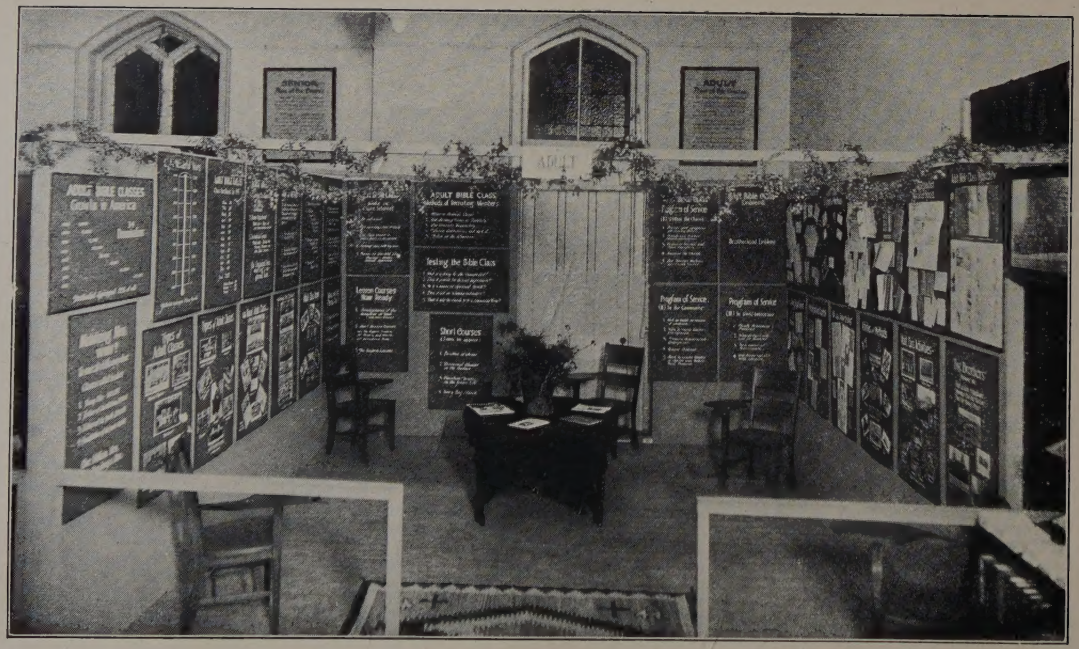
Jesuit-Krauss-McCormick Library
BV1550 .B6
Bovard, William Sherman MAIN
Adults in the Sunday School : a field an
3 9967 00215 3208


LSTC
Library
LUTHERAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CHICAGO

1.2
SEMINARY
Date Du



ADULT EXHIBIT AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE, SARATOGA, NEW YORK, MAY, 1916

94,435

ADULTS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

A FIELD AND A FORCE

By

WILLIAM SHERMAN BOVARD

Superintendent, Adult Department of the Board of Sunday Schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church

THE ABINGDON PRESS

NEW YORK CINCINNATI

LIBRARY
LUTHERAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

BV
1550
.B6

Copyright, 1917, by
WILLIAM SHERMAN BOVARD

Printed in the United States of America

First Edition Printed August, 1917
Reprinted September, 1918; August, 1920
February, 1923

TO

MY WIFE, WHOSE SYMPATHETIC
INTEREST IN MY MINISTRY HAS
GIVEN ME COURAGE AND HOPE.

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	Introduction	9
	Preface	13
I.	The Adult Awakening	15
II.	Adults in the Sunday School	29
III.	Some Characteristics of Adult Life	39
IV.	The Organized Bible Class	55
V.	Maintaining Class Interest	67
VI.	What Adult Bible Classes Should Study	79
VII.	The Teacher and Teaching Methods	89
VIII.	A Program of Service	103
IX.	The Bible Class a Brotherhood	121
X.	Recruiting for the Kingdom	131
XI.	Federation	143
XII.	The Adult Bible Class in the Country Sunday School	159
XIII.	Testing the Bible Class for Efficiency	175
XIV.	The Home Department	187

ILLUSTRATIONS

Adult Exhibit at the General Conference, Saratoga, May, 1916 ..... Frontispiece

Christian Culture Class, First Methodist Episcopal Sunday School, Aurora, Illinois .... Facing page 62

Circles of Service 109

The Brotherhood Bible Class, Queen Anne Church, Seattle, Washington .. Facing page 126

Firemen's Class, German Methodist Episcopal Church, Marietta, Ohio ..... Facing page 190

INTRODUCTION

THE organized Adult Bible Class movement is of recent origin and has had a phenomenal growth. All such movements are in danger of majoring in features that are as superficial as they are spectacular.

The message of this book strengthens the conviction of the reader that the Adult Bible Class movement in the modern Sunday school has in it the elements of permanency. It is the natural outworking of the prevailing religious emphasis of recent years.

The spirit and truth of the Scriptures have won a victory over literalism and traditionalism. If the Bible is to make its contribution to Christian character and to social redemption, it must be studied eagerly and regularly by the people who are mainly responsible for the policies of the outstanding institutions of our civilization. It is no insignificant matter that millions of men and women are organized into groups for the study of the Bible and individual and social life problems.

INTRODUCTION

The conception of the Christian life set forth in the pages of this book is well expressed by the author's phrase "naturalizing religion." The day of a selfish asceticism has passed. Religion belongs with life, with all of life. Its distinguishing marks must be found in character and conduct in the practical affairs of life rather than in mere forms and ceremonies. One can hardly overestimate the value that is accruing to the popular conception of religion through the influence of the Sunday school upon adult life.

While the purpose of this book is to connect Adult Bible Class workers with the permanent values and the commanding opportunities of their work, it also aims to offer well-tested methods in class organization, practical suggestions as to the material and methods of teaching, and a program of service so true to the nature of the organization and so varied in its possibilities that any Bible Class in the country or in the city may find guidance.

Although the work deals with all kinds of adult classes, it has been written with the man power of the church particularly in mind. It is in a real sense a man's book.

INTRODUCTION

The limited literature now available on the Adult Bible Class work has received an important reenforcement in this timely message.

EDGAR BLAKE.

Chicago, Illinois.

PREFACE

One of the most striking features of the modern Sunday school is the attendance of so many adults. Among these may be noticed an ever-increasing number of men.

This larger number of adults represents an enormous power. To adjust it to the program of the Sunday school and church, to organize it for worthy tasks, and to properly direct its energy, tests the vision and administrative ability of the pastor and his official advisers.

It is the aim of the author in the chapters that follow to discuss the main features of the Adult Bible Class movement, and to point out some ways and means for utilizing the splendid resources of adult life for the kingdom of God. The author shares the growing conviction in the church that the Sunday school is peculiarly adapted to lead the church in the task of relating the unenlisted adults to the benefits and opportunities of religion. He offers this discussion as a contribution to this end. His official relation to the Adult

PREFACE

Bible Class movement for several years past has given him an exceptional opportunity to study the movement at first hand and over a widely extended field. How well the opportunity has been improved will be indicated by the pages that follow.

The author desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to Dr. Edgar Blake, corresponding secretary of the Board of Sunday Schools, Dr. Henry H. Meyer, editor of Sunday School Publications, and their associates for encouragement and helpful suggestions.

W. S. B.

Chicago, Illinois, March 1, 1917.

CHAPTER I

The Bible, the greatest book in the world; to teach it, the noblest service; to live it, a conquering power.

—*Anonymous.*

The worst disloyalty to the past is to mistake it for the future, and to think of God as exhausting himself in the achievements of the past.

—*Robert E. Speer.*

CHAPTER I

THE ADULT AWAKENING

Only in very recent years have the laymen come to a consciousness of their indispensable worth to the church. They decline to think of themselves merely as sheep to be fed and sheared. Their place in the church is exalted to a level with that of the ministry. They initiate legislation and formulate plans and programs for church activity. The most alert pastors are seeing that in their laymen they have all kinds of resources for the accomplishment of the tasks of the modern church. It is especially gratifying to see an increasing number of men taking a lively interest in the church. Clubs, brotherhoods, laymen's associations, and Bible Classes witness to a great awakening among laymen. Ministers frequently comment upon the growing proportion of men in their congregations. No single movement in recent years bears such convincing testimony to an adult awakening as the Organized Adult Bible Class.

ADULTS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

In 1908 there were only 1,059 Adult Classes enrolled with the International Sunday School Association. These represented 34 denominations and included all North America. After eight years the enrollment of Organized Classes has reached 60,000; 15,000 of these are in the Methodist Episcopal Church; 5,000 in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; over 20,000 in the combined bodies of Methodism in North America.

In the presence of this tide of adult life that is flowing into the Sunday schools and churches to-day it is natural to ask, How are we to account for such a desirable awakening?

It is unquestionably true that the Bible has a new interest for popular thought. It is no longer looked upon as a book of magic with power to minister to our needs simply by having it in the pocket, or about the house. The average man is seeing that the Bible is a book of life; that it must be transmuted into moral and spiritual fiber, and then translated to the world in terms of life and conduct. Such a practical use of the Bible calls for study—frank, fearless, eager study.

Intelligent men will not try to feed their

spiritual hunger with emotional rhapsodies about the Bible. They know that the Bible was never intended to be an object of worship. They have learned that the Bible dreads nothing so much as to be let alone. It does not ask for an ecclesiastical bodyguard. It wants to have a fair chance at life. It craves discriminating study. The real friends of the Bible are those who care more for the conscious fellowship of Him whose life and teaching give perennial worth to the Bible than they care for any defense of any particular theory of biblical inspiration.

One Bible Class of business men, which has grown to include several hundred members, began with a small group of earnest men who were impressed by the fact that the Bible is the most popular book in the world, and the most potent factor in the world's civilization, and yet they were conscious that it was not a vital factor in their own life and conduct. They organized the Bible Class to find the life-giving truth that makes the Bible so indispensable to every age.

Dr. Frank Ballard in his recent Fernley Lecture on Christian Reality in Modern Light quotes the following from Dr. W. N. Clarke's

report of a sermon he heard on "The Impossibility of Maintaining a Satisfactory Adult Religious Life on the Basis of Ideas Received in Childhood": "You went out from the Sunday schools in your teens with such ideas of God and the Bible as you had then been able to receive, and you have been living your religious life upon them ever since. In the world's work you have bent your powers to large undertakings, and have grappled with the enterprises of adult humanity. But upon the Bible and the thought of God you have never made strenuous exercise of your maturer faculties; you have never done man's work in seeking a more adequate knowledge of these realities, but have tried to live along nourished by no larger or richer conceptions than you made your own when your powers were those of children. No wonder that your adult minds cannot more than half believe the Bible and the God of your infancy; no wonder that your religious life is narrow and poor, your minds are perplexed by the hard questions of the day, and your energies are repressed or misdirected. You need to put away childish things and make your own the Bible and the God of men." Something like a

response to this same appeal is seen in the adult awakening of our day.

Another emphasis in the appeal of religion to-day that wins the attention of strong men is the stress put upon character and life rather than upon destiny as the chief concern of religion. Character first, then destiny. Destiny depends upon character, and character is not conferred in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; it must be achieved by divine and human cooperation. Salvation through fellowship with Christ concerns more than the soul hereafter, it has to do with the life here and now. Men are urged to become Christians, not primarily to escape future torment or to win future reward, but in order to be the kind of men they ought to be in this world of need. The claims of Christ are insistent, for every day lived out of harmony with him is lost beyond recall. Every man's personality represents moral and spiritual resources which can be developed and enriched only by entering into vital relationship with Christ. The possibilities of Christian character afford a strong appeal to thoughtful persons.

Again, many people who had lost interest in the church because it seemed to them that

religion was not being expressed in service to mankind, but was being confined largely to forms of worship and self-culture, are renewing their allegiance to the church because the message of our day insists that the benefits of worship must be invested in service. Otherwise religion would be guilty of being the worst kind of selfishness. Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world," but he made it quite plain that the place for the light to shine is where it would be dark but for that light. He said, "Ye are the salt of the earth," but the place for salt is not in a barrel in the storeroom, but next to that which will spoil if not salted. It is hard on the salt, but it is its business to lose its life in saving something. Our spirituality must likewise be brought to bear upon the personal and social problems of others if we are to escape the curse of selfishness in religion. There is a tendency to pit worship activities over against service activities as if we must choose one or the other. They belong together. "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder." The great commandment is two-sided, but not divisible. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength,

and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." The church to-day must be a community force. She cannot satisfy her conscience if she undertakes nothing more than to keep worship alive. She must lead all the agencies that seek to establish the rule of God in all human affairs.

Another present-day insight should be mentioned as holding a reason for the awakening of men to the claims of religion. In dealing with human life we are recognizing its unitary nature. Life cannot be divided into compartments. It is manifold, but each interest is inseparably joined to all the others. Physical well-being is bound up with spiritual benefits; social and recreational interests are concerns of religion. We must deal with the whole of life or we do not properly deal with any of it. The field for the redemptive power of religion is the total life of human society. Such a conception of life and religion opens the way for a church program that cannot fail to challenge the most enterprising men and women of every community. Many of these talented people have had a notion that the church stood for a very narrow and extremely individualistic program. It has not commanded their interest.

But when they come to understand that the church is concerned with the fight against destructive diseases, preventable poverty; that the recreational life and social life of youth is a legitimate objective for church activity; that the acute and insistent problems of modern industry represent an opportunity for Christian statesmanship, they have hospitality of mind for the church. The church, with a program that includes the saving of the whole of life everywhere, enters the community with so many points of contact that it soon fills the consciousness of the community. It becomes the center of interest as it should be. Tides of life flow toward it for strength and from it for service.

Again, it seems clear that the church is making one of her most effective appeals to the strong men of the community by recognizing her allies and freely giving them credit for helping rather than hindering the common cause of righteousness. It is not necessary to credit education, sanitation, recreation, legislation, and philanthropy with all the regenerative power and resources needed by the race—thus ruling out the necessity of the distinct spiritual service of the church—in order

to admit all these forms of service among the helpers of religion.

The church as the outstanding exponent of religion appears to better advantage in a world so full of need when she welcomes every agency that enters the conflict on the side of truth and justice as an ally. A serene confidence in the uniqueness of her mission, and the deeper satisfaction of her ministry should always prompt the church to take a magnanimous and sympathetic attitude toward all expressions of interest in the conservation and enlargement of human values. When the church goes into the old world, for example, where ancient religions have been exploiting human need through weary centuries, it is no longer her policy to regard everything in the ethnic religions as utterly worthless. She uses discrimination and shows a spirit of fair consideration toward every philosophy or practice that has any of the fruits of the Spirit to its credit. Joseph Cook gave utterance to this spirit of hospitality when in one of his flights of eloquence he called the great ethnic religions before him and pronounced each one in some measure *efficient,* and then he turned to Christianity and with fine discrimination pronounced it the

only *sufficient* religion for the regeneration of the world.

We must freely admit that society abounds in organizations and agencies to-day that are not included within the organization of the church. They are partial and superficial in their contributions to human need. Their advocates sometimes make the mistake of regarding them as sufficient substitutes for the church. They are not that, but their service is praiseworthy as far as it goes. It is within the province of the church to profit by the services of such allies in the varied field of human need. Take, for example, the army of trained scientists engaged in painstaking research, seeking remedies for destructive diseases. The results have already saved for the church human life and talent which she must have if she is to win the world to Christ. All the agencies that are busy conserving human life are surely working in harmony with the church that understands her total task. Again, there are many educational enterprises independent of the church as to authority, but in perfect harmony with her in the common fight against ignorance and superstition. The unafraid church is calling for trained intellects,

enriched personalities. God undoubtedly can take the weak things with which to confound the mighty, but how he must long for the service of the best equipped brains possible, in the work of establishing his kingdom here in the earth.

The church as the custodian of the appropriating, vitalizing and spiritualizing gospel of Jesus Christ has the right of "eminent domain" to all the products of human endeavor. None of the allied institutions or organizations in the social order can contribute the eternal element that gives completeness and permanence to their work. The church alone has committed to her the secret by which temporal values may be carried up into the eternal.

This is no time for an ascetic, exclusive church, forever on the defensive, frightened at the danger of pollution by contact with the reeking world. The church that would save its life by aloofness from the world shall surely lose it; but the church that counts no part of its traditions or organization too sacred to risk in the strenuous service of mixing the leaven of Christian love all through the conflicting, clashing life of the modern world will save its own life by mastering all of life.

It is this fearless assumption of her rightful leadership in present-day movements for human redemption, that gives the church her increasing command of the strong men of our day.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is the awakening of adults general?
2. How should the average man regard the Bible?
3. What is the highest motive for being a Christian?
4. How are worship to God and service to man related?
5. In what sense must the whole of life be served by religion?
6. What is meant by "Allies of the Church"?

CHAPTER II

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed.—*Acts 17. 11, 12.*

CHAPTER II

ADULTS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday school is well adapted to be the agency through which the awakened adults shall express their new religious interest. More and more the Sunday school is becoming a real educational institution. Its determining factor is the life to be served. That life comes to it clearly graded, with graded needs. The Sunday school architecture, organization, equipment, and lesson material are all being determined by the manifold and graded needs of human life.

The assembly type of Sunday school is passing. It never has been a success as a school. Its tenacious devotion to enthusiasm and uniformity as its chief ends has beguiled it into a sacrifice of educational ideals and methods. The adult generation to-day is the product of that type of Sunday school. It is no secret that this generation is innocent of any extensive or systematic knowledge of the Bible. As it comes back to the Sunday school in

Adult Classes let us see to it that a real educational opportunity is afforded it.

The representative character of the adults who come to Sunday school makes them an opportunity of unusual promise. They come as the home-builders and sustainers, the church supporters, the business directors, and the substantial citizens. They represent the great cardinal institutions of our civilization. The service the Sunday school may render these adults affects for good the home, the church, business, and citizenship. We must not be content with superficial service. The Sunday school must so provide for the instruction and inspiration of these men and women that every institution through which they express themselves during life will be modified by the influence of the Sunday school.

The modern Sunday school is adjusting its organization and its program to the well-tested educational principle, that we learn by doing. This principle calls upon the Sunday school to organize its forces for the practice of the truth it studies. This affords another reason for the Organized Adult Bible Classes in the Sunday school. This adult life represents incalculable power for service. The Sunday

school session should be a time for instruction in the Christian message and in the nature of the needs to be met by it. The week following should be marked by some definite efforts to practice the truth studied on Sunday.

There are indications that some Sunday school boards have not readily appreciated the possibilities of the large adult division. Instead of adjusting their administration to the enlarged Sunday school, they have left the Adult Classes to work out their own salvation. Instead of welcoming the adults as a new force come to serve, they have accepted any service the adults may have rendered as a pleasant surprise.

To what extent should the Organized Classes in the Sunday school adjust their programs of service to the program of the school as a whole? Judging from the large number of annual reports received from Adult Classes, the present practice is for the Organized Classes to find their own fields for service and engage in such activities as appeal to them without particular reference to what other agencies of the church may be doing. The number of Sunday schools having a correlated program of service activ-

ities is probably very small. Unquestionably the service activities of the Sunday school should be graded after the same method used in grading the pupils and the lesson material. This, however, does not prevent the Sunday School Board from having general supervision over the service which is being rendered by the separate departments of the school.

The Organized Classes should be given large freedom in planning and carrying out service within the life of the church and in the community. They represent organized forces so distinct that the General Benevolent Boards may call upon them directly for cooperation in the world enterprises. The Sunday School Board should know about and approve the work which the Organized Classes are doing.

The attitude of half-hearted interest on the part of the Sunday school authorities must be replaced by a serious purpose to make the adult division of the Sunday school a real asset rather than a liability. The adults are in the Sunday school to serve. Their first concern must be the welfare of the children and youth. Instead of appropriating all the good meeting places for their own classes, they should see to it that well equipped quarters

are provided for the children. If church improvements are required in order to provide adequately for the Sunday school, the adults should lead in making the improvement.

What shall be done with the collections taken in the Organized Classes? If they are all turned into the treasury of the school, what provision shall be made for meeting the expenses of such services as the Organized Class should perform? The very life of the class demands activities of service in its organized capacity. The class will need to expend considerable money in making full proof of its ministry.

Either the Sunday School Board should permit the Organized Classes to retain a certain per cent of their collections, or a definite appropriation should be made for the work of the Adult Classes or department. Where the class retains a portion of its collections, or where class funds are raised independently of the Sunday collections, the class should report its receipts and expenditures to the regular meeting of the Sunday School Board. Great care should be taken, even in the matter of finance, to promote unity and harmony of administration. It is quite possible that the entire matter of Sunday school finance will

undergo radical changes in method, as the movement for church efficiency progresses. Already some schools and churches are operating under a common budget, raised by the duplex envelope system, and report that the method works well.

Unquestionably, the interest of adults in the Sunday school helps to hold the interest of children and young people. The early teen-age boys, beginning to be conscious of budding manhood, are liable to regard the Sunday school as too juvenile for them. The fact that their fathers and older brothers attend the Sunday school and show great interest in it is a most potent influence in holding these active boys to the school. The same is true respecting the influence of the women upon the girls. This service is not, however, the main advantage of having the adults in the Sunday school. In every community, whether in the city or in the open country, there are community needs crying out for relief. The community has a right to look hopefully to the church for leadership in responding to these needs. The church has failed as a community force many times because her adult life was not available. The adults were not

available because they were not organized for such opportunities.

The church will never solve the city problem until she secures the help of the men who make the city problem. The commercial and industrial leaders, who with sublime audacity have built up the great congested centers, must put their resources and services at the disposal of the churches, if the cities are to be moralized and Christianized. Likewise the elusive rural problem will only be run to earth and effectively dealt with when it becomes the business of the people whose welfare constitutes the problem. The country church must have country leadership.

In a later chapter I hope to offer a suggestive program for worth while service by the Organized Adult Bible Classes. As the years pass it will become increasingly clear that the provision of the Sunday school for adult membership is required to make the Sunday school organization effective. One of these days the officers of the Adult Classes will be the men and women who began Organized Bible Class work as intermediates and continued it through the senior years. After furnishing a large quota of leaders and teachers for the other depart-

ments of the Sunday school, the remainder will pass on to the Adult Classes with the spirit and the experience that will fit them to lead in the work of the Adult Classes.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why should adults be in the membership of the Sunday school?
2. What significance is given adults by their representative character?
3. Why should study and service go together?
4. How should Adult Classes be governed with respect to the school as a whole?
5. What should be the policy of Adult Classes with respect to offerings?
6. What effect has the adult attendance upon the interest of the boys and girls?

CHAPTER III

The circle of the church ought to be widened to embrace and utilize the immense amount of unconscious and "anonymous religion" that exists outside the church.—*Paul Strayer.*

One of the most grievous and pernicious blunders in practical religion has been the adoption of the false antithesis between things secular and things religious.—*Borden P. Bowne.*

CHAPTER III

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT LIFE

NOTHING is more elusive to the student of developing human life than the dividing line between the epochs marking this development. Where does the period of childhood end and that of youth begin? For a long time the consensus of opinion among careful students was that the line of separation lay between twelve and thirteen. The exceptions observed became so numerous that many began boldly to say that the dividing line is between eleven and twelve. Now the earlier point seems to be quite freely admitted to be the truer guess. Likewise the immediate neighborhood of twenty-one has been commonly accepted as the beginning of adult life. But why the selection of that age? Is it an arbitrary division for the convenience of classification, or does it mark the arrival of new characteristics? Must we not have at least two sets of data before us in trying to locate the begin-

ning of adult life—the facts that belong to the inner life of thought, feeling, and attitude; and the facts that relate to one's place and experience in the social life? One may be but a youth in personal life and an adult in social relations. Teen-age mothers have not reached mental and emotional maturity simply because they have the duties and cares of a family upon them, nor may one remain adolescent in personal traits simply by remaining in school and keeping away from the duties of mature manhood. Within limitations we may bound the stages of life's development, but the lines are by no means straight.

The Sunday School Council of Evangelical Churches, recently held in Boston, discussed this matter very fully, having before it the opinions of a large number of educators and Sunday school workers. The action finally taken by that body recognized the need of flexibility in classifying youth at the beginning and at the end of that period. The twelfth year may be classed as either Intermediate or Junior, and the early twenties may be classed as either Young People or Adults in the departmental organization of a Sunday school.

Keeping the two types of data in mind, we

may locate the adults socially by their responsibility in connection with the outstanding institutions of society. They are the heads of families; their lives are dignified by the exalted privileges and responsible duties of parenthood. The economic problems of home support are insistent; there is no escape from them; to negotiate them with honor taxes the thought power, industry, and courage of millions of men and women every day. To pilot a ship between Scylla and Charybdis was a simple task compared with the unheralded commonplace duty of equipping a home and feeding and clothing a family. No wonder young people who have seemed light and frivolous and carefree before marriage, have surprised their friends by a steadiness of industry and an efficiency of management when they have undertaken the interesting and taxing duties of home-building. It should not be surprising that such a social institution as the home should greatly modify the personal characteristics and needs of the men and women who bear its responsibilities. Their mental attitudes change; their spiritual hungers are more insistent; their self-sufficiency wanes and their need of God becomes more

real. Alert spiritual advisers will recognize the divine relationship of marriage and parenthood as offering unusual opportunity for helping these early adults to profit by a very definite Christian experience. The marriage ceremony need not be more solemn, but it should make religious values more real than is generally the case. A natural religious exaltation might easily take place when a new home is set up by having the pastor and some intimate friends come in for a service of prayer and religious conversation. The less formal the service the longer its influence will last.

The christening of the children is a service full of possibilities for good to the parents. The good will not come so much from the immediate service as from the relationship it establishes between the home and the church, the pastor and the family. This relationship properly appreciated and cultivated will result in untold value to the parents and to the entire family.

As the home represents the tenderest ties of love and companionship, it becomes the scene of the most poignant grief and suffocating sorrow when death breaks the family circle. Religion must be there at such a time, not

simply by the little black book with its solemn ritual, not mainly with customary platitudes of comfort, but rather in all kinds of gentle acts of friendship, the clasped hand, the sincere eye, the anticipated need, and the golden silence. Nor should the ministry of friendship relax its diligence when the broken family returns from the silent grave. The healing sunshine of Christian hope, the courage of Christian faith, and the compassion and sympathy of Christian love must rally to protect those parents from the invasion of doubt, bitterness, and despair. They must be brought out among their friends, they must be related to opportunities for service. Nothing will so quickly restore them as helping others. Herein is the great opportunity of the Adult Bible Class. It is not enough to pass a resolution of sympathy and send a floral offering. The wounded lives must be restored; neither the secretary nor the treasurer can fulfill the ministry of the class to the stricken members.

The needs of adults as home-builders are not confined to the economic problems and the special experiences to which reference has been made. The continuous task of training and educating the children is a constant rev-

elation of parental needs. Many parents yield to the temptation to shorten the school term of their children, that they may use their labor for the common treasury. In many instances no doubt such expediency is necessary. More often, however, persons of vision and trusted friendship could advise and help perplexed parents at this point, and save to the children the priceless boon of an educational opportunity.

Parents with a keen sense of responsibility for their children often express painful solicitude as the children pass from childhood to youth. While they cannot wish them to remain children always, they protest that the cares they experienced when their children were small are as nothing compared with their concern for them as young people. At no point do parents need and deserve the intelligent and sympathetic cooperation of the leaders of the church and the school as when their children are unconsciously substituting the community ties for the home ties, when other personalities are beginning to share with the parents the controlling influence in the lives of the youth. The Sunday school is only beginning to respond to the cry of overburdened parents at this

critical stage of life development. This response must not be confined to the service rendered directly to the youth, but the parents themselves must be helped to understand their own children in relation to moral and spiritual transition and growth. The service must be one of cooperation at all points. Many a young man in whom the church was deeply interested has been lost to the kingdom of God because the church did not include the parents in the service of religious education. The present-day movement for the organization of parents' classes in the Sunday school is based upon real needs, which the Sunday school is well adapted to meet.

We may study to advantage the needs of adult life by considering the variety of adult activities commonly called "business." So much of mature life is spent in some form of business that it would be strange indeed if men's thinking and feeling were not largely determined by their experiences in business. What is the vast army of business men doing? Is not business a process of transmuting lower values into higher? Raw materials of low commercial value are subjected to the arts of the manufacturer and the service of trans-

portation and exchange until the value has been greatly increased. This bewildering complex of human activity in the field of material values is such a large part of life that one may well ask if religion has not some vital relation to it. There have been spokesmen for religion who have called the continent of business life *secular*. Their main message respecting secular life was to point out its dangers, its greed and graft, and its materialistic tendencies. The tendency of such a disparagement of business life has been to raise the question as to whether men can be successful men of affairs and at the same time be sincere spiritual church men. Fortunately for our day, religious leaders are claiming the whole range of life as the legitimate field for the spiritualizing service of religion. They are emphasizing this world as the field for religious victory. Individuals are not so much to be caught up out of the world by religion as they are to devote to the cause of Christianizing civilization the results of all their activities.

Economic prosperity is fundamental to the triumphs of Christian character and culture. No nation can ever hope to develop her character resources to the high degree of richness

and efficiency that God has made possible, without developing her material resources to their fullest capacity. The law of transmutation of values is not limited in its application to what we call material values. It extends through the realm of character. What we call wealth may be changed from terms of money to terms of manhood. Investments of money in churches and schools will issue in higher values of character and culture. The dependence of cultural institutions upon the ministry of money should not be regarded as a regrettable situation, but, rather, as the normal way by which business is to serve the kingdom of God.

The recognition of this law of transmutation gives a spiritual meaning to the activities we call business; it exalts and dignifies the work among material things. The business man becomes a partner with the teacher and the preacher in the common end of establishing here in this world a kingdom of Christian character. The emphasis shifts from the relative sacredness of callings to the relative genuineness and spirituality of motives. The barriers that separated priest from people vanish. The way is open for all men to become coworkers with God. The business of

LIBRARY
LUTHERAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

the church is no longer that of wresting people out of their normal relations to life but, rather, teaching them how to be truly and effectively Christian in these relationships. The church never went into the world with so many points of contact, and with so much commanding sympathy for all sorts of people as she is going in to-day. Her perspective is truer, and her approach is more human, and consequently more divine, than at any period of her wonderful history. The industrial life, with its extremes of poverty and wealth, its rapid transitions in machinery and methods of organization, represents a field of human need that tests to the utmost the power and promptness of the church in invention and adaptation.

The relationships and duties involved in citizenship also reveal adult needs that challenge the church for help.

There has been so much secrecy and sufficient chicanery in directing political affairs that the church has usually given the realm of politics a wide berth. Politics has not always been so considerate of the church, but has frequently sought intimate fellowship. It might not be amiss to suggest that the surest way for the church to save herself from the invasion of

objectionable politics would be to pursue a more vigorous campaign of reform against the corrupting political methods that obtain in the affairs of city, state, and nation. No conception of the sanctity of the church can be a sufficient reason for indifference to the needs of men that arise because of their relation as citizens to public affairs.

The attitude of the church toward the duties of public officials should be so appreciative that the best men in the community would not shrink from assuming such tasks. It too often happens that such a reproach rests upon office-holding in public life that a very great advantage is given to scheming, selfish men, who are not sensitive to criticism of their motives. The church should strive to exalt the service of public men above the lowlands of greed and graft. Whenever a man of high ideals and honest purpose assumes a place of public trust he should be made to know that the sympathy and confidence of the advocates of religion are his. Every public official should be made to know that his administration is not a matter of indifference to church people. The church is supposed to deal chiefly in light. That light should always be illu-

minating, often searching, and sometimes scorching. It will always have healing in its rays.

The church is making unmistakable progress in meeting the needs of adults in the matter of citizenship, by bringing them together for the consideration of civic problems in the light of Christian truth; by organizing them to do certain definite things in the way of applied Christianity. The Adult Bible Class movement is making for a better understanding between the nonchurchgoing men and those who have grown up in Christian fellowship. Association of these fellow citizens in the atmosphere of the church for frank discussion of the common problems of citizenship cannot fail to make for mutual understanding and practical cooperation.

The rapidity and thoroughness with which this country is voting out the saloon makes even more insistent than ever the call to the church to go out with unaffected human touch and bring the former saloon frequenters into a sympathetic, hospitable fellowship that they never dreamed the church could offer. As a State senator in a Western State said in speaking of these outside men, "They will

not *break* into the church, but they are waiting to be urged to come in when the church swings open the door with the fearless abandon that a serving church must ever have toward hungry-hearted, lonely men." For such men the Organized Bible Class is the recruiting station, the church's warm hand shake of welcome, and the best answer to the criticism that the church has no place for the needy man.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Who are classified as adults?
2. How are adults influenced by their relation to home life?
3. How should business activities be interpreted in terms of religion?
4. In what way may cultural progress depend upon economic prosperity?
5. How does citizenship reveal adult needs?
6. What may the Adult Bible Classes do to help the church meet these needs?

CHAPTER IV

The Organized Bible Class is out for business, or it has no business to be out.—*W. F. Tomlinson.*

There is hardly an Adult Bible Class anywhere but might be doubled in membership within a brief period, if a few people set about the work.—*Wade Crawford Barclay.*

CHAPTER IV

THE ORGANIZED BIBLE CLASS

By means of organization the Bible class has come to be a distinct institution in the life of the church. It is being tried out in so many Sunday schools of such different types and is being found so effective as a religious agency that it merits a closer study.

An examination of the most satisfactory classes shows that they grow out of a definite aim on the part of their organizers. Unenlisted men of great possibilities for the church are in the community and ought to be brought to Christ and added to the working forces of the church. The Organized Men's Class is invoked as the means to this worthy end.

In a certain city the church was located where an unusually large number of "down-and-outers" frequented. The pastor desired to make his church a saving station for these neglected men. He organized a Bible class of

about forty strong, devoted church men and assigned to them the specific work of winning and holding these unfortunate brothers.

In a certain Sunday school a noble woman observed that a group of young mothers were accustomed to bring their little children to the Beginners' Department and sit as spectators until the class session was over. It occurred to her alert mind that these mothers might be organized into a Bible Class for the study of the problems of motherhood, and that such a class might be made the means of reaching mothers who were not at that time interested in the Sunday school. She proceeded upon that inspiration and gave to the church one of its most valuable agencies. By observing this first principle of a definite purpose for the class, a necessary grading of the adult life is partially done, and the reason for the class is seen to be worthy.

As a preliminary step to the formal organization of the class it pays to canvass the available constituency, talk over the worthwhileness of the purpose, and create a conviction that the proposed plans should be carried out. The organization will then be an outgrowth of an imperative demand. When the interested

persons are called together to effect the organization, the occasion should have the benefit of carefully arranged social and inspirational features. Each person should be impressed with a sense of the great importance of the undertaking. The possibilities of the proposed class should awaken enthusiasm.

The organization should not be too elaborate. The purpose to be realized should determine the organization, rather than any prescribed standard.

An Organized Bible Class provides for an important distribution of responsibility. It has an advantage in that it provides for a regular meeting as often as once a week. This frequency and regularity of meeting tend to promote group consciousness and to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood.

It is worth while to give the class a significant name and a striking motto. These with a daring program have caught the imagination of an entire community, resulting in a quickening of religious interest far beyond the membership of the class. At the organization of a certain class of men composed largely of nonchurchgoers, the newly elected president said, "Men, we have been called 'the strays.'

I suggest that we strike out the 'r' and call our class 'The Stays.' "

In selecting officers discriminating care should be taken, at least in the case of the president, secretary and teacher. These three officers form a triangle in which the promise of success resides. The president must be a leader. He must have a contagious interest and a definite program. Many a class has fallen out of the running on the first lap because the president was a negative quantity.

Few Sunday school workers have realized as yet the potency for success that lies in the records. A secretary who keeps records with accuracy and fullness and makes them available for the information of the entire class, holds a key to class efficiency that no other person possesses. He can devise effective means for maintaining regularity of attendance; he can secure and report information respecting the sick, unemployed, or bereaved members of the class that will lead to a fraternal spirit that ought to characterize every class.

In the Organized Class the teacher's duties are simplified. He is not burdened with the details involved in assembling the class. His main task is to make the class period of the

utmost profit to the members. He must think wisely and broadly of the lesson material that will be most suitable to his class. He must study with great care the effect of the methods he uses in conducting the class session. He must be not simply a man of ability, but one of adaptability. Above all he must have a character that commands the respect and confidence of all who know him. Other officers are important, but upon these three the pyramid of success is based.

The organization is not complete, of course, until each class has enrolled at headquarters. The main reason in relating the individual classes to each other by a system of enrollment at the central office is not the benefit that may come to the class, although that is no insignificant matter. The main advantage lies in being able to use the central office as a clearing house for receiving and dispensing information concerning successful methods and suggestive achievements. This unselfish purpose in enrollment ought to appeal to many classes content to live unto themselves. Many a class owes its existence to-day to the stimulus that came in the form of a report from some successful class. The inquiries that

come to the Board of Sunday Schools are numerous and insistent. They are not asking for theoretical answers. They want to know how other classes are meeting situations similar to theirs. The classes that have entered the connectional fellowship by enrollment are able to supply elixir of life that keeps many a brother class from heart failure. It should be a strong incentive to any class to meet so successfully the needs of its church and community as to be an example to other classes.

In Sunday schools where two or more Adult Bible Classes exist, they should complete the matter of organization by becoming an Adult Department. In the larger schools where the room is available the adults may all meet together for an opening service. In such cases the superintendent of the department presides. This form of organization does not endanger the integrity of the several classes. It simply provides for desirable cooperation. The organization of the department should be an example of simplicity. In some instances the classes do not meet at the Sunday school session as a department owing to lack of available space, but they provide for meetings in the capacity of an Adult Department at suitable times

CHRISTIAN CULTURE CLASS, FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL SUNDAY SCHOOL, AURORA, ILLINOIS

during the week, for social purposes or for the consideration of proposed tasks in which all the classes are interested.

Where the adults are organized as a distinct department, and have facilities that make it possible, the activities carried on formerly by the organized classes may be conducted by the department. By making the Adult Department the abiding unit, the way is open for introducing a plan for study courses that will greatly increase the educational value of the study period.

At the beginning of the Sunday school year a series of lesson courses may be agreed upon, each to be of three or six months' duration. The teachers will be selected for the courses and will teach the lessons assigned throughout the year. At this point it will be seen that the Adult Department has a faculty and a curriculum. What about the membership of the classes? After the nature of the different courses has been clearly put before all the members of the department, they will be asked to choose which course they will take first, subject to such an adjustment of choices as may be necessary to furnish each class with a reasonable number. At the end of three or

six months' study, as the case may be, the members will change to other classes, but the teacher will present the same work a second time.

Something like this is being introduced into well-organized Sunday schools. It is the logical outcome of the growing determination to give religious education the benefit of all the standard methods employed in purely literary institutions. It is a slow process to secure carefully graded organization for Sunday schools that have not been controlled by educational aims, but have been in the habit of thinking of success in terms of numbers and enthusiastic exercises. So it will be some time before the promoters of large Bible Classes, with their inspirational messages, will see that large departments, with many small study groups, answer best the educational needs of adults, and meet equally well the demand for social, fraternal, and community service. Workers in the field of adult religious education must not become weary and discouraged because their ideals are not more quickly realized. The rapidly growing interest in religious education for the whole range of human life is bound to help us toward the goal of a deeper and more lasting success with adults.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What importance is attached to definiteness of aim for the Organized Bible Class?
2. Why give a name and a motto to a class?
3. Who are the key men in a successful Bible Class?
4. What are the duties of the president? The secretary? The teacher?
5. What is meant by "The Adult Department"?
6. In what way may an Adult Department be organized when the facilities for a meeting place are not adequate?
7. What effect has thorough organization upon educational values?

CHAPTER V

Why is it that in the minds of many people religion and gloom are synonymous terms? In popular thinking the minister, the undertaker, and the funeral are like the three fates, a solemn trinity in a doleful unity.—*A. L. Hall-Quest.*

It's given me to perceive,
And I most certainly believe
That when a feller's jest glad plum through,
God's pleased with him, same as you.

—*James Whitcomb Riley.*

CHAPTER V

MAINTAINING CLASS INTEREST

In common with most organizations the Adult Bible Class approaches high tides of interest and then recedes to low levels. There are times when the energy of the class is centered upon increasing the membership, spreading abroad publicity, engaging in spectacular performances. At such times the class is said to be flourishing. During such a period new people are enlisted, and some who were losing interest are restored.

A very common method of awakening class enthusiasm is the "contest method." This is often used by dividing a class into two groups and putting them against each other in securing new members. Sometimes the contest is waged between two classes in the same church, the women's class against the men's class for example. Occasionally classes are ambitious and daring enough to arrange for a contest when they represent different churches or even different cities. One of the most

striking illustrations of this contest method that have come to my notice took place between two men's classes fifty miles apart. Although detailed rules were agreed upon to govern the contest, and a reasonably short time was allowed for the campaign, the enthusiasm reached such bounds that on the closing Sunday more than three thousand men tried to attend each class. The men's classes of all denominations for miles around were disbanded on that day. No one would take the position that such an excessive use of the spirit of contest is commendable. Undoubtedly, many men were made familiar with the Adult Bible Class through this contest who had never known about it. Some of them probably found permanent interest in some men's class. But when all the possible benefits have been recited and fully appraised, the method must be classed among the "get-rich-quick" methods. There must be a more excellent way.

The use of special days as rallying occasions is a method that yields good results. The calendar offers a number of attractive days for such use, such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter, Christmas, Labor Day, etc. With the use of these rally days should go

striking and commanding publicity. There is no good reason why the powerful art of the cartoonist may not be used in "putting across" the message of the Adult Bible Class. Many classes have in their membership persons who have the natural gift of the illustrator. This gift should be encouraged and used. The conventionality with which church work has been limited so often should not be permitted to stand in the way of a free use of any winning form of publicity.

Another item in the work of maintaining class interest is the atmosphere and spirit of the class session. The class should create an atmosphere of wholesome, refreshing sociability. Time should be taken in connection with the class session to emphasize the variety of life interests for which the class stands. Worship and instruction are the great interests during the class period, but good fellowship, fraternal service, and community welfare have an important place in the life of the class, and ought to be recognized in the session of the class. Many people are won and held to membership in the Bible class to-day because it stands for a manifold program.

The most steadily useful classes to-day have

discovered that there is no substitute for methodical, patient, persistent work in keeping up the membership and interest of the class. The officers accept their duties conscientiously. They survey the field. They make and keep complete records. They follow up new members until they are built into the activities of the class. They have an interest in the absentee, they make him know that he is missed. The class stands ready to serve in a practical way any member who is in trouble of any sort. No class will accidentally fall into success any more than a business concern will accidentally prosper. Somebody is putting thought and time and sacrifice into the Bible Classes that are alive and fruitful to-day.

One of these businesslike classes was organized in a village of fewer than five hundred and fifty souls. The charter membership consisted of sixteen men. The president believed that this organization could be made the means of reaching a large number of men who had shown no interest in the regular services of the church. Very early in the history of the class it was made clear to the community that the entire range of life interests in that village

were to be served as far as possible by the men of the class called Big Brothers. The teacher of a group of boys desired very much to take some of his boys to a convention where the religious welfare of boys was to be discussed by prominent leaders. His going depended upon his getting his corn crop harvested. The Big Brothers turned in and gave him a lift and made it possible for him to attend the convention. These Big Brothers built a substantial dam across a small stream that ran through the village in order that the young people might have a swimming pool for the summer and a skating pond for the winter. Such a sympathetic interest in young life holds the boys and girls to the church.

The class set for its membership goal the last available man in the village and immediate community. A complete list of these men was drawn up. It was found that there were just one hundred men who ought to be on the roll of the Big Brothers Class. A personal campaign brought the membership up to sixty. Then this thing was done. The sixty members were organized into ten groups of six each and the forty unenlisted were divided into ten groups of four each, and a group of four was assigned

to each group of six. At the time of the last report the enrollment had reached eighty-one.

A young man, an expert accountant in a large mercantile establishment, was made religious director of a men's class which was small and purposeless. He introduced into the class the same systematic business methods that were used in the establishment with which he worked. The unenlisted men were not only invited by mail, but visited by members and accompanied to the meeting. The result was an average attendance the first year of one hundred and twenty-five. During the year fifty men were won to Christ by that class and were received into the church.

The postal service, telephone, and automobile have great possibilities in them for keeping up the class interest, when they are freely used. How quickly a committee may call up a large number of persons and remind them of some special feature at the Bible Class session that should strongly appeal to them. How irresistible is the invitation that couples with it the announcement that the speaker will call round with his automobile and take his friend to the class with him.

MAINTAINING CLASS INTEREST

There is a strong tendency on the part of the members of a class to look to the work of the teacher as the all sufficient attraction to maintain class interest and attendance. This tendency is quite sure to crop out when the attendance begins to fall off. Some will lay it to the kind of lessons used, others will find fault with the teacher's method. They say that he does not give opportunity for discussion or questions, or that he permits a few "argufyers" to spoil the hour.

The teacher, with his methods and materials, is one important factor in sustaining class interest and attendance, but he must not be charged with the whole responsibility. He deserves and should have the heartiest co-operation and support of all the officers and members of the class.

There are teachers who resent suggestions from anyone. In such cases the situation is rendered more difficult. These are exceptions. Most teachers are eager to know how their work is impressing the members of the class. There are tactful ways by which the frankest suggestions may be made without offense. The successful Bible Class is a democracy. It prospers in proportion as all the members

recognize their responsibility and endeavor to meet it.

Nothing has in it the potency for sustaining class interest that belongs with actual achievement for others and for the growth of the Kingdom. Real alert people soon weary of activities that center upon themselves. Classes that seek to provide only for their own comfort and growth, as if they were ends instead of means, need not be surprised when interest lags and attendance falls off; but let the membership of a class see that their organization is serving to relieve distress, to hearten the discouraged, to add new recruits to the Kingdom, to further missions, and to give religion a larger place in the consciousness of the community, and their interest will increase and their powers for inventing ways and means of larger service will be quickened. Every service rendered becomes a new point of contact between the class and the constituency it would reach. Better than all other forms of publicity are the worthy achievements done. You can no more hide such a class from the admiring eyes of the community than you can hide a city that is set upon a hill.

MAINTAINING CLASS INTEREST

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is said of the "contest method" of increasing class interest?
2. In what way may the observance of "special days" add to class interest?
3. How far may a Bible class go in the use of "striking publicity"?
4. What effect has the social atmosphere upon class interest?
5. What modern conveniences aid in keeping in touch with the members of a class?
6. What may be said for the method of personal invitation in building up class membership?
7. How does a worth-while task affect class interest?

CHAPTER VI

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, . . . whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. —*Saint Paul.*

CHAPTER VI

WHAT ADULT BIBLE CLASSES SHOULD STUDY

WHAT shall the Adult Bible Class study?

"The Bible, of course," said a ready brother when this question was asked in a Sunday school institute recently. So it would seem. A Bible Class would be expected to study the Bible. The answer is not quite as simple as the prompt brother's accent would indicate.

What is the scope of Bible study? There are those who would confine Bible study to the content of the book. If any other matter should be proposed as the basis of class discussion, it would have to come in as "extra-biblical" material. The term "extra biblical" is misleading, for the reason that the fruits of the Bible are as certainly within the scope of Bible study as are the contents. A simple illustration should make this apparent. If one should set out to study an apple tree, he would not think his work complete if he did not

include in his investigation the luscious fruit borne by the tree. Has the Bible borne any fruit in the world's civilization? It is quite fair to the Bible not to include in the study of it the great Christian characters, institutions, and movements that have grown out of it? If we are to be true to the spirit of the book itself, we must regard it as more than a volume of so many pages of printed matter. It is a body of truth that has unbroken causal relations with Christian life and literature even unto our day.

We agree with our brother that the Bible, of course, should be the material for the Adult Bible Classes to study. We insist, however, that its fruits, as well as its contents, shall be included in the study. As a matter of fact, many Adult Bible Classes are using the class hour for the discussion of social problems and community interests. How does this square with the legitimate business of a Bible Class? Is it not perfectly congruous? If a man is seeking to qualify as a physician, we expect him to study medicine thoroughly. If, however, he expects us to call him when we are sick, he must study diseases also. He must be able to recognize symptoms. He should also

have some knowledge of the patient to be treated. This parable hardly needs to be declared. Bible Classes do not meet simply to master the message of the Bible, but to qualify as social doctors in applying the saving truth to the conditions of individual and social life that need changing. It is perfectly legitimate and of the utmost importance that the Adult Bible Classes should claim for themselves a wide scope for their study and investigation.

The adjustment of the modern methods of religious instruction to the adults in the Sunday school is such a recent undertaking that many improvements may be expected as the work progresses. In the early stages of this work all adults were treated alike. We are now insisting that adult life requires grading for educational purposes as certainly as childhood or youth. The diversity of age and of interest must be respected if the Christian character of the members of Adult Classes is to be built up by educational processes. Nothing will aid so effectively in their classification as a variety of elective courses of study.

One of the best-organized schools in Illinois has recently introduced into its Adult Department a regular curriculum, having such courses

as Social Service, Missions, Church History, Teacher Training, Historical Bible Study, Uniform Bible Lessons, and Courses for Parents. A thoroughly qualified teacher is assigned to each course. The members of the department may elect the course they will study first, and after completing the term in that course they elect another. In this case the Adult Department rather than the class is the unit of organization.

The following are some of the courses being provided by the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Sunday Schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

1. *The International Uniform Lessons.* The adoption of Uniform Lesson material by the Sunday schools of North America undoubtedly did much toward bringing the Sunday schools of the different denominations into a closer fellowship. There is no educational virtue, however, in the mere fact of uniformity. The Uniform Lessons must stand on the merit of their educational value, and not on their uniformity. They are so well presented and so ably expounded in the Sunday school publications that teachers and classes of adults find them profitable. They are more satisfactory

during some periods of the year than at other times.

2. *The Development of the Kingdom of God.* Believing that worth-while religious results could be secured by selecting some great developing idea in religion and studying its growth, the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Sunday Schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church has provided for a three years' study of the idea of the kingdom of God, as it has developed in Jewish and Christian history. The first two years deal with material found in the content of the Bible. The third year follows the idea of the kingdom of God from Pentecost to the present time. It is easy to see that such a study brings out the fact that the real unity of the Scriptures is in vital, growing ideas; that the rule of God in human life did not cease when the last book of the Scriptures was written, but is a fact of our day. This course offers a most profitable method of Bible study.

Short Elective Courses

The religious interests of adult life are so varied and the groups organized for study and

service are of so many kinds that it has seemed advisable to offer some short elective courses that deal with timely matters and portions of Scripture having exceptional religious value. A beginning has already been made in this direction. The following short courses are available and have been widely used by the Adult Classes:

(*a*) The Liquor Problem. A course running for one quarter, edited by Professor Norman E. Richardson. This course is a perfect arsenal of fact and illustration on the present status of the temperance situation.

(*b*) Poverty and Wealth. A course of one quarter's duration, edited by Professor Harry F. Ward, the expert on social and industrial problems. This course is calculated to bring about a clear understanding of the issues that produce so much friction in the social world and to point the way to industrial peace.

(*c*) International Peace. Thirteen lessons in which Christian truth is brought to bear upon the insistent problems of international relations. Who does not see the great importance of Christian laymen becoming informed upon the facts and principles of world brotherhood?

Other Short Courses Soon to Appear

(*a*) Devotional Studies in the Psalms. A study of thirteen selected psalms as they relate to the great virtues of character and experience.

(*b*) Thirteen Parables of Jesus. Selected with reference to their messages for our day.

(*c*) The Church and Its Task. A course that involves the study of the manifold task of the modern church, and the nature of the church's organization to meet that task.

(*d*) Everyday Ethics. The men and women of our strenuous day need a moral tonic to strengthen them against indifference to the plain moral requirements of everyday life. This course will be of great value to busy men who live in the white heat of temptation and are subjected to the subtlety of casuistry.

Books suitable for Adult Classes to study are being prepared upon nearly every subject of vital interest, such as family life, Christian stewardship, church doctrine, civic duties, and social service.

The department of Religious Education of the Chicago University is putting out a series of studies adapted to the needs of Adult Bible Classes.

ADULTS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Many of the courses prepared for the Young Men's Christian Association lend themselves readily to the use of teachers of young men's Bible Classes. The Sunday school leaders of all the important Protestant denominations are striving to meet the growing demand of the Adult Classes for suitable lesson material. The promise for a more intelligent and therefore a more efficient laity in the church was never brighter than it is to-day.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the scope of Bible study?
2. Should adults be graded in forming them into study groups?
3. What are the advantages of short elective courses?
4. What provision is made by publishing houses for lesson helps for Adult Classes?

CHAPTER VII

The primary requisite for the teacher will be an eagerness to learn, a sufficiently deep interest in the subject to lead to thorough study.

No one can teach this class who already knows all about the subject.—*Henry F. Cope.*

CHAPTER VII

THE TEACHER AND TEACHING METHODS

WHO shall teach the Adult Bible Class? Usually the one who asks this familiar question wants to know whether it is advisable for the pastor of the church to assume the duties of Bible Class teacher. Sometimes, however, the questioner is calling out a discussion of the personality and equipment of one who shall undertake the responsibility of teaching a company of adults.

As a general policy the teachers of Adult Classes should be found among laymen. The pastor's relation to the entire school and to the other services of the Sabbath day should excuse him from teaching any particular class. It often happens, however, that in launching a Bible Class organization the interest and leadership of the pastor will be required in the most intimate relation to the class. The wise pastor will regard this duty as temporary,

and will seek a suitable successor as early as possible

The standard by which the teacher of an Adult Bible Class is selected is often very faulty. A notion is quite prevalent that the teacher must be gifted above his fellows in the art of public speech, that he must have the prestige of prominence in public life. Such a standard at once limits the available persons to very few in the most favored community, and leaves many places in despair. Ready speech, a trained intellect, public prominence, are not hindrances to success in teaching a Bible Class, but they are not so essential as to determine the selection of the teacher. In many communities the best person for teacher is obscure, modest, unsuspecting. He will not be a candidate. He will have to be discovered, urged, almost drafted. With the sympathetic backing of the officers and members of the class, he will surprise himself and his friends by the helpful way in which he conducts the class session. David was not the most likely son of Jesse on whom the crown should be placed, but the prophet saw the kingly possibilities in him. Moses protested his limitations when called to lead Israel

out of bondage, but Jehovah was insistent until Moses went to his great task. The essentials are not always on the surface. There are Bible Classes not a few to-day where plain, practical business men are teaching every Sunday, and among the members of the class may be found educators, leaders in their professions, and men distinguished for public service. The teacher who may hope to succeed must have moral integrity. His character must always carry more weight than his words. While he should not have a morbid conscience that unduly magnifies scruples, he should not have an elastic conscience that ignores plain moral distinctions either in his teaching or in his practice. His religious thinking should be influenced by ideals as well as by specific commandments. He should seek to develop a well-balanced, wholesome personality.

The dogmatic man does not make a good teacher. Truth seekers do not find much incentive to investigation and discussion from one whose opinions are final. Good teaching requires mental hospitality on the part of those who are to be taught. The teacher must show equal hospitality if he is to encourage it in the members of his class. Add to a dog-

matic temperament a notion that there is only one clearly defined standard of Christian experience, and only such as can qualify thereby are recognized as within the fold, and you have a brother disqualified to teach adults. On the other hand, a man who respects the honest opinions of others and freely admits his fallibility will have the respect and confidence of the members of his class. If he is very much more concerned that each member of his class shall find Christ as a Saviour than that any standard method of conversion shall be vindicated, he will probably help men of different temperaments and prejudices to submit themselves to the mastership of Jesus.

It is not essential that the teacher of an Adult Class shall know the Scriptures better than any member of the class. He should not permit anyone, however, to excel him in eagerness and industry as a student of the Bible. He should supply himself with some of the best modern helps to Bible study. He should not lose himself in the less important matters of the Bible about which there are many different opinions, but, rather, lead his class into the rich fields of evangelical truth on which character feeds and thrives.

TEACHER AND TEACHING METHODS

We have discussed elsewhere in this book the courses of study suitable to Adult Classes. We have pointed out that fairness to the Bible demands that we shall study the characters, institutions, and movements that have been produced by the Bible, as well as its content; that we should study the personal and social life problems for the solution of which the Bible offers the only sure remedy.

This statement of the scope of study for Adult Classes naturally leads to a discussion of the methods to be employed by the teacher. What material, if any, shall the members of the class have? Wherever possible each member should have a Bible. A great many classes have a supply of Bibles for distribution at the class session. In rare instances the members bring their own Bibles. This will hardly become a common practice among the large numbers who attend the classes, but are not habitual Bible readers. The church publishing houses put out a bewildering variety of lesson leaves, magazines, and booklets. Some of these should be provided for the class in sufficient quantity to furnish each member and visitor with a copy.

Special consideration has been given Adult

Classes by the publishers in furnishing an Adult Bible Class magazine which contains able discussions of the lessons and valuable articles and news items concerning the work among adults. This type of lesson help would seem the most fitting for Adult Classes. With the class thus equipped, how shall the teacher present the lesson?

One of the most common methods is called "the lecture method." The teacher accepts his class as an audience and delivers an address more or less closely related to the lesson for the day. This method strictly adhered to has the advantage of occupying fully the brief time allotted for treating a lesson that deserves more time than the Sunday school hour affords. Many a teacher would be glad to use the dialogue method if the pressure of time did not make the necessary pauses of that method seem so wasteful. So often the members of the class seem to prefer to be addressed rather than to be questioned, that the ready talker follows the line of least resistance. Where the lecture method prevails, special speakers are frequently invited to address the class. In some cases this practice is resorted to so often that a systematic pursuit of a study

course is impossible. Such sessions may have great inspirational value, but they can hardly be called sessions of teaching.

The classes differ so radically in size, personnel, and interest that no single method can be prescribed for all classes. A wise teacher will not confine himself to any one method continuously. He will vary the method, even during a single class session. Certainly he will introduce variety during the course of a season. If the lecture method should be insisted upon as the prevailing method, it would limit greatly the available persons for teachers; for few teachers are able to lecture with profit, although many could conduct a class discussion wisely. It is quite generally admitted that participation on the part of the class is a great advantage in fixing the truth discussed in one's thinking. Every time the teacher challenges the class to formulate either a question or an answer, he provokes a profitable mental reaction whether the formulation is completed or not. Some present-day Bible Classes are so large that the teacher has no choice but to try to talk to them. If the adults in the Sunday school were always organized so that their unity could be cared

for as a department, and their diversity capitalized by forming small groups for purposes of instruction, the educational results would undoubtedly be greatly improved. There is no defense for the unmodified lecture method in the fact that it is common in the universities. The analogy is not to the point. The members of Adult Bible Classes are not related to the courses of instruction presented to them as college students are to the university courses. Adults are not after degrees. They will not be subjected to searching examinations, nor will they take careful and ample notes of what the teacher may say. They need nothing so much as to be talked with, to be reminded, to have their scattered knowledge organized about worthy ideals, and in the interest of important service.

Some classes are conducted as an open forum. The teacher acts as a referee, a prompter or director. The subject for discussion has been given an introduction before the class by the teacher on some previous Sunday, members of the class have been designated to open the discussion. All the members are free to participate if they choose. This method used occasionally, say once a month, popularizes the class, and brings out the trend of thinking in

the circles from which the members of the class come.

A most pathetic situation frequently observed is a teacher facing the eager class utterly unprepared to meet the opportunity. He may have relied confidently upon the conveniently prepared outline and material furnished by the editor of the lesson help, but even that requires some conscientious preparation if it is to be a help and not a hindrance. If he seeks to conceal his unpreparedness, the incongruity of such an unethical attempt plagues him, and his failure in the effort to deliver goods which he has not is reflected on the faces of his hearers, to his discomfiture and shame. No method or device can ever be a substitute for preparedness of mind and spirit on the part of a teacher of religion.

Given certain lesson material, the average teacher and average class facing each other, what is a reasonable expectation for the half hour's session? A natural procedure would seem to be first an exposition of the lesson, setting forth clearly its main significance and its bearing upon the life interests of the class. The prepared teacher should do this in a relatively short time, after which opportunity

should be given for an informal conference or discussion, so skillfully directed as to secure the participation of many and the interest of all. It is no more necessary that the teacher should always point out the application of the lesson to the needs of the members than that a story should always be accompanied by the expression of its moral. Most people appreciate the compliment of being permitted to make their own application.

Let us conclude, then, that educational ideals for Adult Classes in the Sunday school call for a recognition of many types of classes, which means that there must be flexibility and adaptation in lesson material and teaching method; that the religious need of the class must be the determining factor with the teacher; that the character and spirit of the teacher will always weigh more than any other qualification, and that the task of the teacher of adults brings him into the midst of some of the richest unused resources of the kingdom of God, and demands, therefore, a high order of service.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Should the pastor of the church be the regular teacher of an Adult Bible Class?

2. What standard should govern the selection of a teacher for an Adult Class?
3. What effect has a dogmatic temperament and manner upon the usefulness of a teacher?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the "lecture method"?
5. What features may be introduced into a class session for the sake of variety?
6. What value is attached to a method that calls for participation on the part of the members of the class?

CHAPTER VIII

When the slums are in the people, the people will soon be in the slums. Hence to labor with environment alone is to doctor symptoms rather than diseases; and to mistake effects for causes is to seek to dry up the stream while the fountain is in perpetual flow.—*Borden P. Bowne.*

Every church just now is living too much by its wits. Never did men in office in the church work harder. Never were they more willing to learn. Never were church buildings so constantly in use. Never were appeals more insistent. Yet at the best, having done all, we stand.—*John Hutton.*

CHAPTER VIII

A PROGRAM OF SERVICE

Some speakers and writers upon the work of the Organized Bible Class have advocated limiting the function of the class to the study and discussion of the prescribed lesson. Classes attempting to observe such a limitation find it almost impossible to enlist the people who need the instruction most. Furthermore, it is altogether contrary to the well-tested principle of education that we must apply the truth in service if we would make it a part of character. Our interest in study is greatly enhanced by seeing its bearing upon the needs of those about us.

The experience of the most useful Bible Classes bears witness that their call is to serve quite as surely as to learn. The church has made a long fight against all forms of asceticism. She is succeeding in interpreting religion in terms of service. Every organization in the church ought to provide for a program that would unite inseparably worship

and service. While religious education is not synonymous with worship, it relates to personal equipment. The value of the endeavor to serve depends greatly upon the personal equipment of the one serving, but the character grows best when absorbed in the welfare of others. No possibility in the Adult Bible Class furnishes a stronger reason for its being than the service it may render in applying religion to the total life of society. It may easily be the leading factor in putting the church into the consciousness of the community. Vast throngs of people in our cities, and in the aggregate large numbers in the country places, live as if the church seldom entered their thought or influenced their life-plans. It is estimated that fully half of the people of this country never go to church.

If religion is to give character to our civilization, the church must get into the consciousness of the people to stay and to sway.

The church will command the serious attention of more people when she multiplies her points of contact. She can do this by greatly increasing the number of her interests. In too many instances the church has limited her interest to a few activities that were com-

monly called religious. We now know that religion has to do with the whole of life, and it is clearly within the province of the church to promote the physical wellbeing, the social relations, the mental growth, as well as the spiritual culture of the people. The modern concern of the church for a supervised recreational life for the young people, or better health conditions for a community, or industrial justice for the laboring classes, is not at the expense of the concern for spiritual culture, but vitally related to a wholesome spirituality. The church with hands outstretched in ministry to all points of human life, individual and social, will be thought about and talked about; in short, it will be the first among the institutions of society.

It is not necessary that the church should in every instance provide in her organization and budget for all the forms of community service that are required. Many other organizations operate in this field. The church should recognize these as her allies. She should foster them and cooperate with them. It is not what particular organization shall do the work, but that the work shall be done.

The eyes of the world will be turned toward

the church with renewed interest when it is more manifest that the church is a dispenser of serving energy rather than a voracious consumer. The popular thought is not entirely free from the notion that the church is an institution to be supported in the community for appearance sake. Our self-respect as a people claiming to be civilized demands that we keep up the church. Just as the Bible finds a place in many a home, where its content is never read, so the church is counted indispensable to a community, even though the people never think of using it. It is an asset of respectability. This superstitious notion of the church will not be banished until the church wears everyday clothes, as well as fine linen, and hits hard blows for social righteousness, and proves that it is not here to be ministered unto but to minister. For such an opportunity the Organized Bible Class has come to the Kingdom.

We now propose to submit a program of service wide enough in its scope, and yet definite enough in its details, to be adopted as a working basis for any earnest Bible Class, whether in the city or in the country.

The widening circles of service shown here

illustrate the field. The Bible Class in the center serves first within the church and Sunday school, then moves out to the community, and extends its cooperation to earth's remotest bounds.

What are some of the things that may be done?

I. Within the Church.

1. Provide good equipment for the Sunday school.

2. Promote and practice church attendance.
3. Engage in personal and team evangelism.
4. Socialize the church.
5. Put business methods into church finance.

II. In the Community.

1. Study social conditions.
2. Work for wholesome recreational facilities.
3. Work to remove all destructive agencies.
4. Promote all constructive enterprises.
5. Relieve distress of every sort.
6. Seek to remove causes of social and industrial distress.

III. In World Enterprises.

1. Study missionary problems.
2. Infuse into the church zeal for missions.
3. Be a center of intercession.
4. Give money and life with abandon.

It will be seen that this program is not impracticable by the following quotations from

reports received from classes that are testing its suggestions.

Men's Classes Report

254 Men—Class made 1,637 calls on the sick, added ten members to the church, and paid $2,000 toward a new Sunday school building.

125 Men—Class participates in political, social, and religious affairs; put out slot machines; is building an additional Sunday school room.

163 Men—Class engages in general relief work, and during the past year conducted a revival campaign.

146 Men—Class holds special evangelistic services every week; maintains an employment bureau; carries on special temperance work.

169 Men—Class supports a boy in East Africa; has two active gospel teams.

120 Men—Class supports two native preachers in India.

252 Men—Brotherhood class supports a preacher in India; conducts a class in jail; maintains a poor fund.

22 Men—Class provides a club room in the basement for the boys.

46 Italians—Class working to bring others of their countrymen into the class.

14 Men—Class placed an electric lighting system in the church; conducted social and evangelistic meetings.

800 Men—Class subscribed and paid in full $625 on the church debt; supports a native missionary in India.

19 Men—Class provided the church with a furnace, chancel rails, and pulpit platform; provided 1,250 square feet of cement sidewalk.

225 Men—The most notable thing done by the class was the Easter missionary offering of $1,950; committee on employment found work for 100 men.

96 Men—Class increased its membership 800 per cent; took charge of Sunday evening service; effected an association with other Bible Classes of the city.

30 Men—Class supports a Chinese student in Peking University; sent 100 Testaments to wounded soldiers in European hospitals; gave Christmas presents to poor and sent flowers to the sick.

Large Class—169 men added to the church; armory rented one night each week for the

recreational use of the boys; "white gifts" for the poor at Christmas.

100 Men—Class built and furnished new room for class at a cost of $1,700.

45 Men—Brotherhood Class added twenty-five new members; gave $90 to church expenses; organized an octet from the class for musical occasions; five members of class were converted.

80 Men—In a rural community the class has nearly every available man enrolled; class built a $300 concrete dam across a small stream, making a swimming pool for summer and a skating pond for winter. The young people believe in the religion of these men and follow their leadership.

Women's Classes Report

300 Women—Gave $1,000 for church building; engage in social work among sick and poor.

14 Women—In large city maintains Home Department of seventy-five members—also a flower mission; supplied 1,500 bouquets for the sick during the year.

80 Women—Class in small town started and maintained a kindergarten department of

the Sunday school; does systematic calling on the sick.

95 Women—Industrial center, class systematically looks after the strange wage-earning girls who come to the city for employment.

50 Women—In small city, class made 921 calls, thirty-eight donations to charity; supports a native pastor in India.

20 Women—Class widely scattered in the country supplied clothing to children in the city and sent Christmas presents.

150 Women—Organized a personal workers' league; conducted socials; entertained the old people of the church; seventy-five per cent of the members did not attend Sunday school prior to joining the class.

17 Women—Country class, helped to support a Syrian mission in a neighboring city; paid $20 to the church budget; purchased hymnals and hymn boards for the church; sent forty Testaments to the soldiers in Europe.

32 Women—In small town, out of this class has come the one teacher training class of the Sunday school; three of the four teachers teaching the Graded Lessons came from this class.

23 Women—Furnished milk for mission kinder-

garten; gave 27 white children a day's outing; did the same for 29 colored children.

37 Women—Class has given $20 a year to a hospital for the past four years; supported a scholarship in China; gave $10 to help a needy family.

8 Women—In the country, bought a new Bible for the pulpit; provided money for new roof for the church; secured funds for painting the church.

53 Women—Paid $10 toward Deaconess fund, $10 to fund for buying robes for church choir; distributed Home Department Quarterlies and visited the members; gave flowering plant to each "shut-in."

113 Women—Have gained thirty-one souls for Christ and are praying and working that they may double next year.

40 Women—Mothers' Class visit "shut-in" mothers; raised special fund for missions; gave social evening for teen-age classes; was means of organizing men's class; have afternoon meetings once a month, with program helpful to mothers.

137 Women—Community work among the poor, with much care given to unfortunate girls; $175 given to the church for expenses;

$10 for coal for needy family; have made 11,000 calls; 300 plants and flowers sent to sick and to hospitals.

65 Women—Gave a progressive supper visiting "neutral" countries, leaving the United States for Hawaii, thence to China, Greenland, in a trip around the world. It was an informing occasion. Furnish a teachers' substitute group, from which the superintendent may call a teacher when one is needed.

216 Women—A bazaar was held from which $100 was realized; the Mercy and Help Committee directs in the care of the poor and the sick; 550 calls were made at hospital and on poor families; 216 articles of clothing were given to the needy; 81 packages of groceries and 153 bouquets were given. The class is divided into groups of twelve, each with a superintendent.

54 Women—In small village, the class provides committees to welcome strangers at each church service; another to call on the sick; this month we are caring for a tramp who lost a foot trying to steal a ride. Our motto is "Alive and Doing."

37 Women—Paid $100 on pledge to new church and subscribed $50 more. Realized $110 on

a quilt we pieced and quilted, securing names which were embroidered on the quilt.

Mixed Classes Report

Raised $73 for repairs on church. Put in gas system in church, furnishing the kitchen and parlors of the church.

Furnish flowers for pulpit; provide clothes for child at orphanage; made 36 gallons of apple butter for orphanage; sent 50 dozen eggs to hospital.

Presented large painting to Sunday school; paid part of church debt; sent box of clothing to orphanage; took flowers to sick persons; brought a number of adults into Sunday school.

Every member worked to make the town dry; great victory in a town that had been a liquor stronghold for forty years.

Bought a new organ for the church; visit the sick, taking flowers to them.

The builders have finished a room in the basement for the meetings of the class, at a cost of $600. They help on all benevolent work of the church.

Fifty new members brought into the class;

money and supplies furnished for war victims; also for missions; class prepared to furnish teachers for Sunday school as they are needed.

Class supports a native missionary in India.

Class of eighteen in the country secured enough young people to organize a new class; this class succeeded so well that it was able to influence the organization of four other classes; the social life of the young people especially cultivated.

Class gave bolt of outing flannel to home for unfortunate girls; does systematic calling; our motto is "Work to Win."

Class gave a food sale for benefit of working girls' home; gave toward fitting up room for vacation home for poor girls; made and gave a whole layette to young mother whose husband was out of work.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is a program of service a help or a hindrance to the educational value of an Adult Bible Class?
2. In what ways may the Adult Bible Class relate the entire church to community service?

3. To what extent does the average church need to be aroused to the insistent needs of the community?
4. What are some of the services an Adult Bible Class may render in the church and Sunday school?
5. In the community? In connection with world enterprises?

CHAPTER IX

Men are made for fellowship, and if they do not find it in the Church of God, they will seek it where it may be found. Men live by fellowship. It is only when hearts and hands come together that existence passes into life.—*Charles E. Jefferson.*

Brotherhood is what the world is clamoring for, and it is an example of brotherhood which the Christian Church must give.—*Charles E. Jefferson.*

CHAPTER IX

THE BIBLE CLASS A BROTHERHOOD

ELIMINATING from our thought organization, principles, movement, and a lot of other modifying terms, do we find grounds for asserting the reality of brotherhood?

Individual assertion is so strong, and the variety of individual distinctions is so great, that it is remarkable that groups of individuals should ever abide together harmoniously. They do. They cooperate with marked consideration for each other's rights and needs. Magnanimity appears in large proportion. Service to the point of sacrifice for others is by no means rare. The elements that constitute love for one another are sufficiently widespread to warrant the claim that there is brotherhood among men. Much in the life of the world to-day accentuates the opposite, but at the same time these untoward conditions by the law of contrast enhance in the thought of men the inestimable value of real brotherhood.

Christian men are challenged as never before to exemplify in all their relations with their fellows the true spirit of brotherhood. The business of being brothers may not call for a headquarters, for clerks to record and tabulate results, for a modern system of publicity, or the investment of large capital, but it is one of the most profitable kinds of business in which any man can engage. Its results are priceless.

The great religious need of the hour is the practice of brotherly love. The fine courtesies and thoughtful kindnesses practiced in the Christian home put that institution in the forefront as the producer of saving character.

It was the practical love which makes a real Christian family which Jesus sought to extend to all when he said, "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."

While the small group in the Christian home should demonstrate the practical working of the spirit of love, the demonstration should not be confined to the home. Our sympathy should be reenforced so that the sorrows and misfortunes of those with whom we have any social or business relations whatever should

move us to share their burdens. Members of the same church, associates in the same business, whether employer or employee, neighbors in the same block, should exercise the most helpful interest toward each other. Many encouraging signs exist, showing that this brotherly spirit is extending its conquest, but flagrant conditions show that the fountain of Christian sympathy will have to be greatly strengthened if the stream is to bear its healing virtues throughout the social and industrial order. If the spirit of real brotherhood has not yet effected the conquest of the family, the church, the Anglo-Saxon race, the home-land, what shall be said of the goal of world brotherhood? If the source of spiritual sympathy has not been strong enough in us to reach out to those whose lives are interwoven with ours, how shall it reach to the uttermost parts of the earth? It is true, as Dr. Robert Speer has so well said, that our modern commerce and wonderful system of communication have made of the whole world one neighborhood, and it now remains for the Church of Christ to make it one brotherhood.

This enormous task will be achieved only by practicing always and everywhere, at home

and abroad, the spirit of brotherly love. The sympathy that shall bind all peoples into one family of God grows strong only by prayer and practice.

Real brotherhood is the goal of Christianity. Jesus put great stress upon the spirit and practice of brotherly love. He prayed that all might be one, even as he and the Father were one, in order that the world might know that he was sent from God. The most convincing evidence of the divinity of the Christian religion is the relation of real brotherhood. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." Brotherhood is the badge of Christian discipleship. John mentioned an important evidential value of brotherhood when he said, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death."

Dr. Charles E. Jefferson says: "The air is full of talk about brotherhood, but brotherhood does not come by poetic quotations and rhapsodical orating. Brotherhood is a spiritual creation. It is a fellowship of souls based upon a fellowship with God's only begotten Son."

Brotherhood is something larger than any

THE BROTHERHOOD BIBLE CLASS, QUEEN ANNE CHURCH, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

organization; it is a spirit to be promoted, an interpretation of life to be practiced. If every man were related to every other man as a real brother, the kingdom of heaven would indeed be at hand.

Unfortunately, the movement toward universal brotherhood must overcome some very obstinate barriers. The spirit of brotherhood has a right to look to the thousands of groups of Christian men meeting every Sabbath around the Bible to do much toward clearing the way for its universal triumph.

We cannot doubt the persistent sway of selfishness in the human heart. No specific experience of divine grace seems to remove one from its subtle attacks. The direct work of grace may be greatly helped by each man conceiving of his personality as including the group of which he is a unit. He can cultivate the idea that he is more than soul and body, that his possessions, his family, his class group, are all a part of his personality. If he identifies himself inseparably with the experiences of the class that has organized for mutual help, his selfishness is swallowed up in his enlarged personality. His planning and his actions involve every member of his new social

body. Every pain or hardship experienced by any member of his new federation is his by adoption. Every element of strength in this social personality is his also. Men of the Bible classes may fight selfishness and promote brotherhood by cultivating the group consciousness.

It is amazing what mutual distrust there is among men. Secret diplomacy is not limited to the nations of the earth. Individuals who ought to trust each other absolutely, often find themselves inquiring into each other's motives and wondering what personal benefits the other expects from certain proposed undertakings. If Christian men banded together for Bible study and for winning other men to Christ cannot show the glory of open diplomacy, of mutual trust, where shall we look for it? Real brotherhood will be seriously delayed unless we can overcome the spirit of distrust. The open life has no nooks for the beginnings of conspiracy.

Another barrier to brotherhood is supersensitiveness. The thin-skinned individual finds it painful to mingle freely with his fellows on the basis of brotherhood. The inevitable jars and knocks and jibes are well-nigh fatal. A

certain form of hazing is what some people need, but it must be administered with great skill and sympathy. While the weak brother must not be permitted to stop the procession entirely, he is worth the patient attention of at least a detachment of experts in the fine art of changing raw recruits into veterans.

Perhaps one of the most formidable obstacles to the promotion of real brotherhood to-day is the inequalities of life. Those things which we are accustomed to call the goods of life are by no means equally distributed. Those who have abundance are not always careful to exercise modesty and humility. Those who have small possessions are not always gifted with right perspective and are easily envious and jealous. We can do much toward overcoming this difficulty by viewing life in the light of duties and responsibilities instead of rights and privileges. Possessions have commensurate responsibilities. The selfish rich are not to be envied, but to be pitied.

Christian men should meet with each other in a fellowship deeper than conventional or material distinctions. Our common manhood is the level on which the points of fellowship converge.

ADULTS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Organized Men's Bible Class invites into its membership men of all shades of belief and of all sorts of vocations. The social atmosphere of the class makes for the spirit of brotherhood. The subjects naturally discussed in the class contribute to a broadening of sympathy and to an increasing of interest in all movements for human welfare. The frequent gatherings for social purposes break down barriers that tend to misunderstanding and make for lasting friendships. The many specific services rendered by the class to the needy neighbors greatly aid the progress of the spirit of brotherhood.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. To what extent do "Brotherhoods" illustrate brotherhood?
2. What is the importance of brotherhood as a goal of Christianity?
3. What are some of the obstinate barriers to the practice of brotherhood?
4. Discuss the fraternal opportunities of a Brotherhood Bible Class.

CHAPTER X

It is no part of religion to compel religion, whose essential is that it be accepted freely and not through force.—*Tertullian.*

To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.—*Saint Paul.*

Reaching one person at a time is the best way of reaching all the world in time.—*H. C. Trumbull.*

CHAPTER X

RECRUITING FOR THE KINGDOM

An ardent Sunday school man often spices his speech with something like this: "We are told that the big business of the church is saving sinners. I say it is not. The big business of the church is saving the children and youth from becoming sinners."

More and more the church is coming to act upon the policy that childhood belongs to God and ought to be preempted for him by the church. We must conserve and train human life through all its stages of development. All this we steadfastly believe, and more. We believe that even the human derelicts, the sin-blighted fragments of humanity, represent values for the kingdom of God that must be restored. In this day, when the outstanding characteristic of the industrial world is economy of resources, when the scraps and waste of material values are put to good uses, it would ill become the workers in human values to ignore even the least promising group of unenlisted people. The victory before the

Church of Jesus Christ is not such as can be won by an elect army of disciplined troops. Humanity is involved. Every person lost is so much defeat to the church. The ends of religion being character and service, only those who participate in the religious processes can share in the ends.

The church has tried a great variety of ways and means for bringing the unenlisted groups of people into vital relationship with the church. The method known as "the protracted meeting" or "the revival campaign" has secured large numbers of religious professions. In many instances the number of converts actually "planted in the house of the Lord" has been pitiably small compared with the number reported as the result of the campaign. The Organized Bible Class is proving to be an effective means for the conservation of the results of the revival meetings. It is also effective in completing much work that the revival only began.

Many Bible Classes are making the recruiting business their chief concern. The members are urged to do definite personal work with their unconverted friends. Gospel teams are formed of members of men's classes. These

teams of laymen go to other churches for week-end evangelistic services. In Kansas and adjoining states marked success has attended the meetings held by these teams. Strong business men who remained aloof from the church in spite of all the usual appeals have been won by the straightforward, manly confessions of the earnest men who know how to present the claims of Christ in terms of every-day life. Their method has been not to preach but to bear witness.

One of the effective features in Mr. Sunday's evangelistic campaigns is the support given by the men's Bible Classes. They attend often in bodies. They take with them the men who have not accepted Christ. The Christian men are alert for the opportunity to help their friends to a decision, speaking to them, or even going forward with them.

After one of these great awakenings in a city, the Bible Classes are found to be the best-adapted agency in the church by which to follow up the work of the revival. The new converts need nothing so much as the fellowship and instruction as well as the kinds of service afforded by the Bible Class.

One of the most hopeful services being

rendered by the Adult Bible Class movement may be called the naturalizing of religion. Bondage to conventionality and imitation has greatly weakened the good influence of many well-meaning people. They have wondered why their representation of religion was not more attractive or commanding. They began the religious life with such a sense of its sacredness, that they adopted "holy tones" and "pious phrases." Religion was thought to be something apart from everyday life. The prevailing labels were clung to as if essential to a claim of being religious. This attitude toward religion is rapidly changing. The "odor of sanctity" is giving place to the "fragrance of reality." Religion is inseparably involved in our daily living. Social hunger, mental outreach, and physical need must find their satisfaction without contradicting the essentials of religion. There is nothing quite so fundamental to spirituality as reality. A man who is not genuine cannot grow the Christian graces and the fruits of the Spirit. Distinctive religious labels are not usually the signs of abundant religion, but, rather, the marks of a straitened, impoverished religion. Robust, wholesome religion expresses itself in terms and with tones

that belong in the street or in the shop. It expresses itself during the week as fittingly as on Sunday. Its great benefits and requirements are as suitable topics for conversation among men as business or politics. It is no more incongruous for a Christian man to press the claims of Christ upon an unenlisted neighbor as they ride or walk together, than to seek to interest him in a business enterprise. The St. Andrew's Cross is authority for the story that two business men lunched together one day at the Blackstone Hotel, Chicago. One was an earnest churchman. The other was not. They were accustomed to use the lunch hour for the consideration of some large business enterprise in which both were interested. On this day the churchman looked across the table at his friend and without changing his tone or the expression of his face said, "Will, why in the world don't you give your heart to the Lord? A man with your talent in the business world ought to be in the big business of the kingdom of God." Will replied that no man had ever put it up to him after that fashion. His friend did not press him unduly at that time, but followed up the lead until Will was converted within two weeks. Then Will went

out and within two months personally interviewed one hundred and forty of his friends and associates, winning seventy-five of them to Christ. One of these at least, a prominent railroad man, caught the same spirit of personal work, for when he was seriously injured in a wreck he won the surgeon who operated upon him to Christ.

One pastor who had tried the usual revival methods with but meager results, decided to pursue a method which he chose to call "cold-blooded evangelism." The title is a protest against the notion that the "warming-up" processes so often employed are necessary before men can be won to Christ. This pastor made an appointment with one of the busiest manufacturers in the city to see him on business. It turned out that it was the pastor's business to press the claims of Christ upon that man. The man appreciated the interpretation the pastor put upon his calling, gave him hospitable audience, and yielded to the plea that he should give his life to the service of Christ and the church. This kind of straightforward, man-fashion work was kept up through the year by the pastor and the men in league with him, with the result that more than one hundred

and fifty persons were won to Christ and joined the church.

Another characteristic of the evangelism carried on by the members of the Adult Classes is that of definiteness. The indefinite interest in "humanity" or "the world" is being focused upon a given individual. His Christian neighbor pays the price of thoughtfulness and friendly intercourse that enables him to understand the man's point of view, to appreciate the forces that have kept him from accepting Christ. With this knowledge of the man's condition he is able to make an effective appeal. Men who are successful in winning others to Christ are finding that the worth-while men like a perfectly frank approach. Some people with the best of intentions have been misled by the figure of the fisherman and his art. They have endeavored to conceal the hook, to catch folks with guile, to use various methods of exploitation. They seem to forget that catching fish and winning men to Christ are two very different things. We catch fish to hurt them. We win men to help them. We deceive fish to catch them. We should never attempt any sort of subterfuge in seeking to win men to a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ.

One of the great needs of our day is a host of men and women who may excel as religious conversationalists, who are able to direct the table talk to the benefits of the Christian life and the insistent claims of Christ upon our time and talents.

What finer art for the millions of members of Adult Bible Classes to practice than such a simple and yet effective method of recruiting for the kingdom of God?

As the first of January, 1917, drew near, a certain pastor, who had made an enviable record in personal evangelism during the five years of his pastorate in his present church, conceived the plan to call for at least *seventeen* people who would compose a "seventeen" class to be received into the church on the first Sunday of 1917. In carrying out his plan this pastor first selected his seventeen prospects and prayed them indelibly upon his own heart, then he called seventeen workers into conference; each of these was asked to form a prayer group of his own selection of from three to seven persons in number. Each prayer group settled upon one, two, or three prospects for whom they would pray and work.

On the Sunday when the class was received

into church membership it was found that twenty-eight had been won to Christ. Fourteen of these were men, including the superintendent of schools, the principal of the high school, and the athletic coach in the high school. In relating the incident the pastor says, "One man, a grocer, when the pastor was in grips with him in his office, called in a clerk, and the two made their surrender to Christ, so that when this business man stood at the chancel of the church he had in that very class a trophy of his evangelistic appeal."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the measure of demand for adult evangelism?
2. Discuss the advantages of securing evangelistic results by educational processes.
3. To what extent has the "Gospel Team" method of evangelism been successful?
4. What is meant by "naturalizing religion"? How does it aid in recruiting for the Kingdom?
5. Illustrate "cold-blooded evangelism."
6. Show the advantages of definiteness in reaching men.

CHAPTER XI

The three dominant spiritual notes of our day are unity, reality, and universality.—*J. Campbell White.*

The conviction is growing very fast, especially among the laymen, that the church has got to adjust itself to the new cooperative and unifying tendencies of the day. The great sin of our day is waste.—*Frederick Lynch.*

CHAPTER XI

FEDERATION

PROTESTANTISM is often criticized for presenting to the world so many independent denominations. Some have called it a scandal. Others have sought to shame the situation by holding up our Lord's prayer, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, . . . that they may be one, even as we are one." Very noticeable progress has been made in recent years toward a more compact organization of the Protestant churches.

The same principles that are involved in relating church bodies to each other are involved in bringing the nations of the earth into an international unity. Undoubtedly, the bringing together of unrelated institutions, churches, and nations is the spirit of the times. The present upheaval of Europe, into which the United States has at last been drawn, is being interpreted as the final throes of the war spirit, a breaking up of barriers that will be

followed by a greater internationalism than the world has ever known.

Whatever real progress has been made toward the unity of the organized forces of Christianity has observed the principle of federation rather than amalgamation. Diversity is not to be deplored. Practical unity must provide for flexibility and initiative on the part of the constituent units.

Mere expansion has its perils. Magnitude is by no means the only mark of importance. We must give attention to the units that make up the aggregate. The lure of the universal is strong and we must be on our guard against its subtle fallacy. World movements offer escape from narrowness and provincialism, but they may fall to pieces of their own weight unless great care is taken to maintain a high standard of quality in the lesser units wherein reside the real strength and safety of the larger organization.

When we reflect we see that the individual is the substantial unit in all our great social institutions and should be the item of chief concern in constructing a Christian world. Individuals are first built into small groups, which must be so tempered through testing

that they take on distinct individuality before they take on the larger social organism. Any grouping of the individuals that sacrifices the integrity and responsibility of the individual is in the direction of weakness, not strength. There should be a reciprocity of service going on all the time between the individual and the group to which it belongs.

There is something fascinating about the goal of one universal Christian Church. To grasp such an idea in the sweep of one's vision is exhilarating. All constitutional diversities are in danger of being overlooked in the light of the glorious fallacy that "all men are created equal." Under the spell of a rapidly approaching "oneness" for a world of factions there is scant patience with those who still insist upon strengthening the lesser units. They are called individualists or denominationalists. However severely they may be criticized for not seeing the millennium in a homogeneous unity of humanity, and for not joining the optimists in shouting it on, they are nevertheless the conservators of real progress toward a unity that shall have strength and permanency.

The sooner we rid our minds of the persisting notion that sameness is essential to

oneness, the sooner we will be able to see that Christian unity does not contemplate likeness, nor equality of talent, in the units that are to enter into it. We shall be able to see also that Christian unity does not depend upon the sacrifice of denominational distinctiveness. Christian unity contemplates the widest diversity. No gift of grace has ever been bestowed that so radically changed its recipient as to give ground for the notion that the individuals to be built into the Christian brotherhood are to be as "so many peas in a pod." Membership in the body of Christ does not require likeness or equality on the part of the members. "We do not have to be twins in order to be brothers."

The glory and the strength of Christian unity are in the diversity of gifts, talents, and temperaments represented in the individuals making it up. We are helped to see this when we think in terms of a living organism rather than in terms of a mechanism. The bond of Christian union transcends conventional diversities. It is inherent in the common spiritual life. The divine nature of this bond of love makes it sufficient to hold the greatest diversities in harmonious relations. The greater

our confidence in the divine nature of the bond of union, the less will be our concern about the bewildering variety of types to be united.

The unique opportunity of the church to-day is to show the world a genuine brotherhood composed of individuals differing widely in their daily activities, viewpoints, social customs, and degrees of maturity of character, and yet treating each other in all respects with brotherly love. Such a sublime and altogether worth-while task will not be accomplished by insisting upon conformity, except in the one matter of loyal allegiance to Jesus Christ. No man shall sit in judgment upon another respecting the process by which the love of Christ constrains him in the expression of his personality. No man shall be denied the right of declaring what he deems to be the truth, while he declares it in the spirit and manner of love.

The unmistakable tendency of our day is to make for a closer federation of the forces having common ends. The various civilizations of the world are drawing closer together as they discover so much that is common to all. The great religions of the world are

cultivating a hospitality toward each other scarcely dreamed of by the fathers. The numerous denominations of Christendom are under conviction for schism, wastefulness, and misrepresentation of the Master. They are divesting themselves of burdensome nonessentials and are drawing much closer to each other as they draw nearer to Christ. If this movement is allowed to go forward patiently by the method of federation, conserving the substantial units, the progress will be real. But if we yield to the demands of a superficial enthusiasm for a world union of Christian forces at a sacrifice of denominational distinctiveness, we are in danger of a haste that makes waste. Just now an element among the laboring classes of the country is furnishing an illustration of the extravagant rush toward a goal that is not to be reached by a dash, but requires the planting of many depots of supplies, patient plodding, and watchful waiting.

The advocates of organized labor have toiled through the years to form unions, brotherhoods, and federations of various classes of workmen, with the result that the laboring classes are being heard in all the councils of the nation. Suddenly there springs up a

movement, impatient with the procedure that takes account of individuals, conditions, and circumstances, and cries out for immediate world-union of all workers. It is as if men busy putting bricks and stones into distinct buildings, forming a city, should drop their tools and in wild frenzy call for a heaping of all the material indiscriminately into one meaningless mass; as if the patient forgers of a chain link by link should be set upon by impatient workmen, who should demand that the work be cut short by forging the material into one big link and be done with it.

Certain misguided enthusiasts, under the spell of an ideal of an international unity, decided to hasten its realization by melting the flags of the nations. They cast them one after another into a common fire. They professed great astonishment that such a "sacramental" procedure should be regarded as a punishable crime. Less crude citizens have pushed their criticisms of nationalism to an untenable degree —the great God hath set the solitary into families, and into nations. The unity he desires is a highly organized unity. It is a whole consisting of well-wrought-out units. The strength of this whole depends upon the

completeness with which the various smaller groups have been able to work out the false and to build in the true.

The bewildering number and nature of organizations in the average church is not due to overorganization, as some have hastily supposed. It is due, rather, to incompleteness of organization. Probably some of the organizations would cease to be if the church should deal seriously with the matter of organization. The sacrifice would not be so large, however, as might at first seem probable; for it would be found advisable to correlate most of the existing organizations, providing for a central directorate to which the separate organizations would be related as cooperating departments. For example, we are finding a growing sentiment in favor of unifying the work now carried on by three or four unrelated organizations of women. Very little modification of the existing societies would be required in order to effect a federation that would secure cooperation, prevent duplication, and in many respects make for efficiency.

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church took initial steps toward a plan for federating the young people's work

as represented now by the Epworth League, the Sunday school, and the Board of Education. This action did not contemplate interfering with the integrity of any one of these bodies, but was intended as a step toward effective cooperation.

The action taken by the same body placing the various forms of men's organizations under the supervision of the Board of Sunday Schools is another instance of the movement toward federation. We are learning that local churches must take the initiative in organizing their forces, while connectional supervision must take account of necessary variation. The hopeful feature in the plan for the unification of the leading Methodist bodies now under consideration is the provision it makes for the conservation of the essentials of each existing body, while it brings all parallel and duplicating agencies into economical correlation.

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America marks the high tide of success in the cooperation of the Protestant communions in this country. Through this organization thirty denominations, representing eighteen millions of members, are cooperating in promoting Social Service, Peace and Arbitra-

tion, Evangelism, Family Life, Country Life, Temperance, Education, and Foreign Missions. The method of work is through commissions. Some of these commissions have salaried secretaries devoting all their time to the concentration of all the Christian forces upon the problems that concern all alike. Cooperation in these forms of service develops and expresses a fine interchurch "fellowship and catholic unity of the Christian Church."

The various denominations carry on their distinctive work unhindered. The stronger they grow in the completeness of their organization and the abundance of their resources, the better it is for the Federation. Therefore the advocates of the Federal Council encourage denominational integrity. Before the federation of the churches can become most effective there must be an extensive and thorough coordination of agencies within the separate denominations, and within the local churches themselves. One of the results of the Federal Council's work has been to stimulate this work of coordination within the churches.

In many cities church federations are formed and are productive of excellent results. The Church Federation of Saint Louis, for example,

includes one hundred and ten churches. It publishes the following ten objects it seeks to accomplish.

"1. To express the essential unity of the churches.

"2. To avoid duplication and destructive competition.

"3. To know the task in Saint Louis by adequate study.

"4. To broaden the vision of church workers.

"5. To establish Christian ideals in the social, industrial, and political life of Saint Louis.

"6. To provide Christian work for neglected fields.

"7. To render service to the community.

"8. To evangelize the city.

"9. To serve and evangelize the unchurched.

"10. To cooperate in great church and social movements."

This method of getting together is not confined to the cities. The churches in small villages often exhibit the most flagrant need of cooperation. Experience admonishes these overchurched communities to beware of the union church that has no affiliation with a denominational body. Unrelated union

churches do not seem to have the elements of permanency.

A much better method of relief in the communities where too many churches are alleged to exist, is to make a complete survey of the entire community. Let the results be frankly faced by the denominations involved. Those having no clearly indicated field will probably see the advantage of putting their energy elsewhere. The withdrawal will not always be the experience of the same denomination. The church buildings in small villages could all be used, even though the number of denominations were reduced. The possibilities of social and educational activities under the auspices of the modern church are beginning to be discovered. Religious work is an all the week affair. One building may be fitted for worship alone, another for Sunday school purposes, another for social and recreational facilities. In such a way the church would indeed become the community center and a community force. The existing salaried force will not be too large to care for the earnest work of a federated movement of the churches to make religion the dominating consideration of the community.

FEDERATION

The basis of hope for a united Christendom is in the principle and method of federation, a unity that provides for necessary diversity. In this view there is abundant room for an ardent advocacy of denominational autonomy, and at the same time a most practical inter-denominational cooperation.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the difference between federation and amalgamation?
2. What is meant by conserving the lesser units in a large organization?
3. Is diversity a help or a hindrance to an effective federation of Christian forces?
4. In what way will better organization overcome the scandal of too many organizations?
5. What is the aim of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America?
6. What methods is the Council using for realizing its aims?

CHAPTER XII

The country church should be a community center. There is no other institution universal among farmers and freely supported.—*W. H. Wilson.*

Young gentlemen, when you go to preach in the city take along your best coat; but when you go to the country take your best sermon.—*John A. Broadus.*

CHAPTER XII

THE ADULT BIBLE CLASS IN THE COUNTRY SUNDAY SCHOOL

No phase of church work is more persistently in the consciousness of Christian people to-day than the needs and possibilities of the country church.

There is a great danger that the thoroughgoing discussion of the so-called rural problem by specialists may have a tendency to arrest the activities of the country pastors, pending the final report of the specialists. The patient may conclude that he should quit work until the exact nature of his trouble is determined and the proper remedy prescribed.

If such an attitude should be assumed, it would be very unfortunate indeed, for no amount of diagnosing will go as far toward making the country church what it ought to be as the increasing of its vitality and the intensifying of its zeal will do. The student of such a situation does not ask for suspended

animation as a condition favorable to study; he asks for a speeding up of all the activities now supposed to be in common practice among the country churches. Perhaps in some instances the need of the country church is not a new program, but a more vigorous carrying out of the inherited order. In most places, however, the real trouble is bondage to a traditional order. Following the program that was handed down from the fathers is the line of least resistance. Those who have but little time to give to the church are easily deceived into thinking that the plant is working to its full capacity and all the results we have a right to expect are surely accruing.

Whether the need is a new program, or new life put into the old one, or both, there are a few great matters that should have our attention.

In the first place, all the life interests of the country people are so interrelated that the church must take account of them if it is to serve the people efficiently. The daily toil, the social hunger, the recreational need, the school life, the religious enlistment, and the steady moral growth all belong to the program of service for the church that is to make good

in the little country community as surely as in the more congested center.

Another matter that has limited the usefulness of the country church is the false notion that religion is for the most part a very solemn and exclusive business. The country church has been the slowest of all churches to shake off the tyranny of asceticism. How often the fathers felt that the church and the graveyard belonged together and should be placed as far as possible from secular activities. In many communities the funeral service was the most frequent service held in the church. The funeral type of service dominated the regular Sunday meeting and the "protracted revival meeting." The solemn feelings about the church produced by the prevailing use to which it was put were defended by good people who mistook this solemnity for reverence. It is the sign of a new day that the country people are believing that a truer mark of reverence for the church and religion is in cleaning up the church yard, painting and decorating the building, and making it the center of community life. The joyous laughter of youth is just as appropriate for the church yard as it is for the school yard. The old

depressing somberness that held its tenure in the name of sanctity has been exposed and found to be a pious fraud. During its solemn reign religion was unnatural. Christians were often as grotesque in their phrases, tones, and countenances as some people are in their costumes.

The country church is starting upon an era of large service by refusing to rely upon anything less substantial than its manifest service to the whole life of the community.

The Sunday school in the country church has suffered much from "militarism." In many places "General Apathy" controls the situation. "Live wires" are not numerous. Danger from innovations is not imminent. Something must be put into such schools that will cause an uprising. The tyranny of apathy must be broken.

In other places the commanding general is "Can't Be Done." How often we meet the paralyzing effects of pessimism. The pastor or superintendent will listen wistfully to suggestions for improvement in the Sunday school organization or program, and show faint but unmistakable signs of favorable impression, but on being pressed to act upon the suggestions

will supinely surrender to the frowning difficulties, with the fatal finality, "It can't be done."

Dr. Abel Stevens, the well-known historian of Methodism, once remarked that what the church needed most was "sublime audacity." Certainly that commodity would transform many a country Sunday school from a state of arrested development to a high degree of efficiency as an agency of religious education. We need more pastors and Sunday school superintendents in the rural communities with initiative and patient persistence. Wherever such have set themselves to the task of making the Sunday school and church a community force, they have found the community ready to respond heartily.

One of the most difficult barriers to the development of the country Sunday school, though by no means limited to that field, is "general complacency." A very small amount of success will satisfy some people abundantly. The fact that the Sunday school attendance is not perceptibly smaller than it was the previous year gives satisfaction to a certain type of superintendent. His scrutiny of the school may not be careful enough to see that while

the number attending may be about the same, the members are different, showing that the losses for one reason or another should make complacency impossible. The good is no longer good when it becomes a barrier to the best.

Nothing has been introduced into the country Sunday school in recent years that has given the school such a large place in the consciousness and favorable interest of the community as the Organized Adult Bible Class. The presence of the parents, not as spectators but as participants in the life of the school has given a new spirit to the entire school. The example set by the parents to the children and youth is not only wholesome and stimulating, but the cooperation of the home with the Sunday school in the training of the children is noticeably improved.

The improved roads, the numerous automobiles, and the telephone have conspired to make the attendance of adults upon the country Sunday school more common than formerly. Officers and teachers can call up the members on the telephone and urge them to come and to "call by" and bring a neighbor who has no conveyance.

The social fellowship fostered by the Organ-

ized Bible Class in the sparsely settled communities is a value to the entire life of the neighborhood that can scarcely be exaggerated. Formerly the annual protracted meeting and the annual camp meeting were the chief religious occasions for bringing the neighbors together. Being only occasional gatherings, they did not meet adequately the social and religious needs of the people. Now the Sunday school, providing for the whole range of life, is helping to make the church a neighborhood center as often as once a week at least. The more intimately the neighbors mingle in a social way in the atmosphere of a religious service, the more readily they will respond to the appeals of the Christian life and to the calls for united Christian service.

Another important service rendered by the adults in the Sunday school is the improvement of the building and equipment for school purposes. When the men and women of the community become a part of the Sunday school, they are more easily impressed with the need of more and better equipment. The reports that come from the Adult Classes in the country places show a remarkable activity in giving to church improvement, building on

rooms for Sunday school purposes, and general improvement of the church premises.

The Adult Bible Class is also well adapted to provide for the subpastoral supervision which the Wesleyan Class system used to carry on. The sick are visited, the unfortunate and needy are helped, and the tempted are held to the faith by friendly interest. In this connection it should be said that personal and team evangelism find no better agency in the country community than the adults who regularly attend the Sunday school. The possibility of this form of service is only beginning to dawn upon the leaders of our rural work. The habit of relying upon the occasional revival meeting for recruiting the Kingdom must not stand in the way of continuous evangelism. The Bible Class session and fellowship furnish a convenient and attractive basis of appeal for the personal worker who would finally win his unconverted friend to Christ. Coming into membership of the Bible Class is a confession of an attitude of interest in the claims of religion, the announcement of a willingness to consider the persuasion of the spokesman for Christ. More recruits for the kingdom of God would come through the Bible

Class if the members would accustom themselves to think of the class as primarily an evangelistic agency.

The Organized Bible Class is coming to be used as a bond between the church in the country and the church in the city. The resources of one may be administered by the other. The classes in the city are in the midst of the struggling poor and the victims of wasting disease. How much good these classes may do if they are supplied with the fresh produce within easy reach of the classes in the country. The city class may become the distributing agent for the country class. On the other hand it often happens that unusual talent is represented in the membership of a city class. The city is usually oversupplied with musical and literary entertainments, while the country even to-day is undersupplied. What a fine fraternal service it is for the class in the city to provide an entertainment in the country under the auspices of the class that furnishes wholesome supplies for the needy in the city. In these days of automobiles and interurban cars such a reciprocity is easily practicable. Dr. Frank Yeigh, of Toronto, Canada, gives an example of this cooperation

between the city class and the country class in a communication to the Adult Bible Class Monthly. He says: "The rural class collected during the fall a carload of fruit and vegetables, which was donated and sent to the city class. The latter paid the freight and distributed the material to hundreds of needy people in the city. The country class asked to be permitted to send benefactions through the city class all through the year, and at Christmas time bags of good things and bundles of clothing came from these generous Bible Class men and women out in the country."

The greatest value in these exchanges of service is not in the tangible blessings conferred, but in the fellowship of a better understanding of each other's problems, and the broadened and deepened Christian sympathy developed by frequent contact.

It all too frequently happens that the little company of devoted people who are sustaining a Sunday school in a country place do not know and can hardly be made to believe that there are enough people within reach of the Sunday school to crowd the capacity of the building. In recent years careful surveys have been made in such communities with astonishing results.

IN THE COUNTRY SUNDAY SCHOOL

Here is the substance of one reported by the Rev. Hugh H. Hudson at a Rural Life Conference held at the University of Virginia: "At a village on the Southern Railway there was found a little church of fifteen members —the only one in the community. The Sunday school had been allowed to die. A distance of two miles was decided upon for the survey. Within those two miles there were found fifty-nine families in which there were seventy-two men, one hundred and twenty-two women, young women, boys and girls, besides nineteen for the Cradle Roll. Two hundred and thirteen people within two miles, yet no Sunday school at all!" It is into such situations as this that the Organized Bible Class may be introduced with such good results, as the following example will show.

A college student was sent to a certain circuit in which there was an abandoned church. The homes of the people in that community were few and widely scattered. The only religious service maintained in that neighborhood was a small Sunday school. The superintendent of that school had been deeply impressed with the possibilities of an Organized Men's Class. He secured by personal canvass

the consent of twenty men to join such an organization. Officers were elected and the realization of the hopes came thick and fast. The interest of the men carried with it the interest of entire families. The women reasoned naturally that if an Organized Class was good for the men, it ought to be good for them, so they organized. The church was resuscitated, and the Sunday school and congregation grew rapidly. During the following winter, when special revival services were conducted, a number of the men who began by joining the class continued by accepting Christ and uniting with the church. The pastor reporting this interesting example of a country Bible Class in the Sunday School Journal declares that the work has been growing steadily for three years, during which time the membership of the church has increased nearly one hundred per cent. He credits the Organized Bible Class with this fine success.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the country church problem?
2. What should be the scope of the service rendered by the church to the country community?

3. How should a country Sunday school go about meeting its opportunity?
4. What part in the program may the Organized Adult Bible Class take?
5. How may the Bible Classes in the country cooperate with those of the city Sunday schools?

CHAPTER XIII

The very basis of all true efficiency is to be found in the inner life. It must be calmed and steadied and mastered if the outer life is to be one of power. The conquest of the life within is the basis of all other human achievement.—*Lynn Harold Hough.*

CHAPTER XIII

TESTING THE BIBLE CLASS FOR EFFICIENCY

NOTHING short of worthy results will insure permanency for the Adult Bible Class Movement in the Sunday school. The number of classes organized and enrolled may increase very rapidly, great gatherings of enthusiastic members may assemble in the great centers and march with banners, and hear spell-binding messages; contests may be held for increased enrollment that will awaken much interest and secure wide publicity. All these things and more like them may come to pass and not prove the efficiency of the Bible Class as an agency for increasing and enhancing character values.

There is no commodity for which the world is in so great need to-day as staunch Christian character. The Christian Church represents organized work for Christian character. It is no depreciation of the church to say that it is one of the great character plants of the

world. All human life is its resources. The power of God revealed in the gospel of Christ is its transmuting force. The Christian men and women are the media through which this force gets to the character resources. The test then of an organization within the church must be the test of character values produced.

In the light of this interpretation of the church's mission let us examine the Adult Bible Class.

What is it doing for the intellectual possibilities of its members? The closest observers of Adult Bible Classes report that there is very little study given to the lesson by adults. For the most part these classes of men and women assemble at the Sunday school hour with no recently acquired knowledge of the lesson to be discussed. Accepting this report as fairly accurate, should we not say at once that the Bible Class as a means to intellectual enrichment and training is a failure? Such a conclusion would be too hasty. The members of the Adult Classes have been receiving bits of knowledge here and there through years of observing, general reading, listening, and active living. The average lesson material that may be presented to them on any given Sunday

will not be totally strange to many of them. It will bear the marks of having done previous service. The teacher who knows this will not require much time in getting the main points before his class. A wise educator has said that mature people do not need to be taught as much as they need to be reminded. The intellectual value of the class period will be in the stimulus to thinking, the repeated challenges to the effort to formulate a suitable expression of ideas, the awakening of suggestions that will persist in their ministry to the mind all through the week. It is a very common experience for members of an Adult Bible Class to be startled along about Wednesday by a vigorous idea that found entrance at the Bible Class period the previous Sunday. A very busy traveling man was intellectually made over by attending a Bible Class. He had long since become immune to the appeals to read thought-provoking books. What leisure he had at home was given to the superficial entertainments that made their appeal chiefly to the senses. He was induced to attend a men's Bible Class. The class was discussing the thrilling experiences of the apostle Paul as he went upon his missionary journeys.

This traveling man suddenly became interested in the traveling man of old. His family was amazed and gratified to find him stocking up the home with maps and books relating to the regions over which Paul traveled, and the customs that obtained in those days.

Another busy layman with large manufacturing interests upon him attended the Bible Class with nothing but a passing interest until one day the wise teacher asked him to take a few minutes the following Sunday to speak to the class upon John Wesley as a leader of men. From that day the man began a thorough study of the life and ministry of John Wesley. He traveled to the land and haunts of the great man, he filled his home with books and curios relating to John Wesley. He was frequently called upon to speak upon some subject pertaining to Wesley. Instances of this sort might be multiplied without number. The adult mind is not a blank, even though it is not college-trained. Conditions are present in the average Adult Class that require but a simple touch either from the teacher's word or the chance remark of a member to start great intellectual activity.

Is the Adult Bible Class measuring up to its

social and fraternal opportunity? Those who are familiar with the purposes out of which the modern Adult Bible Class movement sprang will agree that it was expected that Bible Classes should provide for meetings at which social and recreational activities should abound. Men and women were seeking their social life in groups unrelated to the church. They were finding their main opportunities for service activities in philanthropic and fraternal movements that left little of their time or energy for the program of the church. The church became aware of the vital relation between social hunger and wholesome spirituality. The social satisfactions are best where they keep close to the consciousness of God's presence, and the spirituality that is thoroughly hospitable to the rights of the social instinct is freest from asceticism. Spirituality and sociability are not antithetical, they belong together. The church is also becoming increasingly aware of the fraternal service involved in the Christian religion. The old fear that "good works" might damage the doctrine of salvation by faith was not well grounded. When that fear had its perfect work it resulted in a divorce of religion from morality. It was

disastrous to both. Religion resides in life, and it demands practical love to our neighbor as the guarantee of the reality of our love to God. An extended study of the Adult Bible Classes reveals the gratifying fact that they are succeeding in bringing people together for social fellowship in such a way as to relieve religion of the gloom and unnaturalness of asceticism. No less certain is it that the members of the Bible Classes are mindful of the opportunities to do deeds of mercy and help. The sick and the sorrowing are visited and materially helped; the institutions for the unfortunates find practical cooperation at the hands of the Bible Classes. Many a Deaconess Home, hospital, and orphanage can testify of the supplies for kitchen or dormitory that have come from Bible Classes. It is a great day for religion when men and women meet on Sunday to study the truth and then go forth to practice it through the week.

The situation to-day no longer presents the church as merely the doctrinal defender of the faith, while the social and fraternal orders outside take the lead in ministering to needy humanity. On the contrary, the church has learned that the best defense is a vigorous

offensive campaign. She is willing to believe that the best doctrinal statements come out of a rich practice of the virtues of religion. The church is leading the forces that would go back of the distress of mankind to the physical, social, and economic causes and would remove the causes. Martyrdom may continue to exalt the virtues of the martyr, but in most cases it is a reflection upon the supine attitude of the church that regards with complacency the social conditions that produce martyrs.

Society to-day is highly organized. The life that most needs helping is found in various forms of organization. There are organized crime, and organized vice, and organized folly. Christian helpers are using excellent judgment in multiplying their power by organizing to learn and to serve. An important test of the Bible Class is its community force. How effectively do these groups cooperate with all the other agencies in the community that are building up character? How strong is the impact they are able to make for the overthrow of the destructive agencies in the community? Broad minded and yet deeply thoughtful students of the movements of our day for social betterment entertain grave fears

that many of these organized attempts to save society are fatally weak in that they give little or no place to God in their programs. The social maladies are so deepseated that any substantial progress toward their cure must have a simple unapologetic reliance upon God. It is a tragedy for talented, well-meaning people to invest money, leisure, and some energy at a task that can never be achieved until God forms and reforms human motives and moral fiber. Society needs more than tolerable conditions; it must have men and women who in giving themselves give God. The Bible Class has come to the kingdom to help put the divine sufficiency into the humanitarian inadequacy. Already we may note signs that very active forces are seeing that it is clear gain to wait on the Lord until they are endued with power.

If the Bible Classes succeed in enlisting large numbers of men and women who have been aloof from religion, if they improve the religious conceptions and deepen the religious passions of their members, and if they help to win the leadership in social service for God, we may well credit them with a large degree of efficiency. We believe that many of them

are able to meet the rigorous test of worthy results.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What kind of values should be expected from the work of the Adult Bible Class?
2. To what extent may the Bible Class produce intellectual awakening?
3. How may the Organized Bible Class serve the social needs of its members?
4. What is the nature of the fraternal needs that Bible Classes may serve?
5. Distinguish between service rendered by individuals and that undertaken in organized capacity.

CHAPTER XIV

From tender childhood's helplessness,
  From woman's grief, man's burdened toil,
From famished souls, from sorrow's stress,
  Thy heart has never known recoil.

—*Frank Mason North.*

CHAPTER XIV

THE HOME DEPARTMENT

During the rapid development out of which the modern Sunday school has come the arrival of the Home Department was one of the most significant features that appeared.

The more clearly the Sunday school leaders saw the educational possibilities of the Sunday school, the more deeply impressed were they that the home must be brought into vital cooperation with the Sunday school. The Home Department was the deliberate answer to this conviction.

During the years that Sunday schools have been operating Home Departments various modifications and adjustments have been made. It is to be hoped that this flexibility, together with the spirit of progress, may continue to mark the Home Department as it seeks to relate every home interest to the mission of the Sunday school.

Before the adult attendance at the Sunday school became such a notable success the Home

Department enrolled a great many able-bodied adults on the ground that since they did not care to attend the Sunday school, they might at least show some degree of interest by consenting to study the Sunday school lesson at home, and to make an occasional contribution to the expenses of the school. The Home Department was perfectly willing to go more than half way with these members, for the lesson helps were delivered to them and their offerings were carried to the school for them. Undoubtedly, this interest in parents and other adults by the Home Department induced many of them to become regular members of the Organized Adult Classes. Most able-bodied people, however, prefer to be listed with the fighting force rather than with the wounded or missing. The growing success of the Organized Bible Class movement admonished the leaders to adjust the bounds of the Home Department field. Inasmuch as most of the members of the Home Department are adults, it seemed advisable to classify the work of the Home Department with the adult division of the Sunday school, and to provide for the closest kind of cooperation between the Organized Adult Classes and the officers of the Home

FIREMEN'S CLASS, GERMAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, MARIETTA, OHIO

Department. The result is seen in the experiences of many schools where the Home Visitors are mainly furnished by the Adult Classes, and where many new members are brought into the Adult Classes by the personal persuasion of the representatives of the Home Department.

There are at least two distinct classes of individuals who must be ministered to by the Sunday school outside of its regular Sunday sessions—those who are called the "shut-ins," who by the infirmities of age, illness, or the care of infants, cannot attend the sessions of the Sunday school; and those who are called the "shut-outs," whose Sunday cannot be the same as that of the main portion of the community. They serve as nurses, domestic servants, firemen, policemen, motormen, conductors, and other industrial workers. These two classes must furnish the Home Department its direct opportunity. If this were all that the Home Department should be expected to do, it is a large enough service to challenge any Sunday school to provide adequately for it. Who that has ever experienced the limitations of physical infirmity will fail to magnify the service that brings the spirit and vision of the modern Sunday school into the life of

the "shut-in," and carries back to the Sunday school the heartening messages from the patient, trustful, grateful sufferers for God, whose hearts sing:

"No chance hath brought this ill to me,
'Tis His sweet will, so let it be.
There is a need, be for each pain,
And He will, one day, make it plain
That earthly loss is heavenly gain."

The martyr spirit has a much wider influence than that exerted by the heroic servants who have met with tragic deaths in some exciting crisis. It means much to a Sunday school abounding with the enthusiasm of youth and the vigor of health to have within its fellowship those who, like the candle, are consumed as they give their light.

The Adult Bible Classes are cooperating with the Home Department in many places, by making provision for Bible Classes composed of those who cannot attend the Sunday sessions. In one place a man attends his Bible Class as an attentive member, and at the close of the session goes to a nearby engine house and teaches the lesson to a group of firemen, who must remain on duty as public servants,

but who are eager for this touch of the religious forces of the church. The service rendered these Sunday toilers is not confined to Bible study. Social occasions are arranged where good fellowship with people of lofty ideals refreshes the men who are confined to a life of routine. The isolation of place and task, which is the lot of many people in every community, must be combated by the social and fraternal ministry of the church if the benefits of religion are to get by the barriers raised by modern life.

In addition to this direct service to the people who cannot attend the Sunday school sessions, the Home Department must consider the efficiency of the home as an institution. It is a far-seeing and a true-seeing Sunday school that recognizes the fact that the home exerts a mightier influence upon the life of childhood and youth than any other agency. Therefore the Sunday school as a community institution must consider the possibility of helping the homes of the community to be better in all that relates to their religious influence. Parents must have more attention and more help from the Sunday school than it is possible to give them in "parents' classes"

on Sunday. The Home Department visitors must be trained to meet in a tactful and efficient way the opportunities their visits afford to help the parents in relating the home life to its religious duties and privileges.

In common with many other features of the Sunday school organization the Home Department has suffered from superficialism. Its advocates have grown restless over the fact that its mission did not afford enough publicity. They were sure that it was meeting a long-neglected need, but its service was so unassuming that conventions and publications failed to give it the due proportion of exploitation. Under the exhilarating spell of such enthusiastic representation as marks many great conventions, those appointed to promote the Home Department have encouraged methods that seem to put statistics above everything else. Large enrollments of all sorts of people have been run up, certificates, banners, contests, and other devices have been called into requisition to encourage the increase in Home Department membership. This membership has added to the total enrollment of the school. Reports at conventions and in church papers and year books have indicated perfectly enor-

mous schools, where the actual attendance has been only ordinary. Investigation has sometimes shown that many of the members of the Home Department had only a faint consciousness, if any, of being at all related to the Sunday school.

The time has fully arrived when the Home Department must have a definite task, and test itself by the standards of character values.

Every Sunday school should make a careful canvass of the people in its community who for one reason or another cannot possibly attend Sunday school. These are the field for the Home Department. A capable interested superintendent and a dependable secretary should be selected for the Home Department. The Adult Classes should rally to the support of this undertaking, furnishing visitors, and helping in the social and evangelistic activities this peculiar field calls for. The visitors from this department must be more than the distributors of lesson helps and the collectors of offering envelopes. They must make the members of the Home Department feel that although they are not present in the Sunday school session, they are a real part of its life. The program of the Home Department may be modified

by the coming of the Adult Bible Class movement, but its opportunity was never more inviting and insistent than it is to-day.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the legitimate aim of the Home Department of the Sunday school?
2. How has the growth of the Adult Department affected the Home Department?
3. What important service may Home Department visitors render?
4. How may Organized Classes help the Home Department?
5. What organization is necessary for a successful Home Department?

125

BV1550
.B6 Bovard, W.
AUTHOR
Adults in the Sunday
TITLE
school.

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME

GAYLOR

BV
1550
.B6